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F I F T Y
S E R M O N S

ON SEVERAL
Subjects and Occasions.

F O R T Y - F O U R

Now published from the AUTHOR'S Manuscripts
prepared for the Press by himself: The first
six having been separately printed before.

By CHARLES WHEATLY, M.A.
Late Vicar of *Furneux-Pelham* in *Hartfordshire*.

With a P R E F A C E,
By JOHN BERRIMAN, M.A.

In T H R E E V O L U M E S.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. DAVIS, in *Holborn*; and C. HITCH and
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M D C C L I I I.

ERRATA.

Page	Line	instead of	read
325	1	by	without
352	2	I find	If indeed
280	ult. }	obtain	obey
289	18 }	they	thy
299	9	merit	meet with
303	24	summoning	summing
304	6	Saints to	Saints, for
323	13	And	A
325	4	abiding	abounding
361	8	thy	thy
400	25		



P R E F A C E.

TH E Reverend and very worthy Author of the following Sermons, was highly and deservedly esteemed, both for his Life and Writings.

His Ingenuity and Learning, Vivacity and Affability, Integrity and Piety, made him greatly valued by all his Acquaintance. And his Writings have added to the Credit of his Name, and rendered his Usefulness much more extensive.

He was the Son of Mr. *John Wheatly*, a reputable and wealthy Tradesman in *Paternoster Row, London*; where he was born Feb. 6. 1685-6. He was educated at *Merchant Taylors School*; from whence he went to *St. John's College in Oxford*, and was sometime a *Commoner* there, but afterwards elected *Fellow* as FOUNDER'S KINSMAN, by his Mother's Side; whose Maiden Name was *WHITE*, and from whose Parents for Want of Male Issue, an Estate at *Fisfield, in Berkshire* descended to the College. He was several Years a *Curate* and *Lecturer* in *London*, till by the Favour of the Reverend Dr. *Astry*, *Treasurer* of *St. Paul's*, he was presented to two small *Vicarages*, *Furneux* and *Brent Pelham* in *Hartfordshire*. They lay contiguous,

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and he supplied Both of them himself. By the Generosity of his Patron, and his own Diligence in procuring other Benefactions, Both have received the Augmentation from QUEEN ANNE'S BOUNTY. At his own Cost, and a very great Expence, he built a *Vicarage House at Furneux Pelham*; where he spent the last fourteen Years of his Life. He was twice married: Both his Wives were grave, discreet, religious: He had no Child by either. The first was *Mary*, the Daughter of Mr. *William Findall*, a Printer at Oxford; the second was *Mary*, the Daughter of Dr. *Daniel Fogg*, Minister of *Allhallows Staining* in London, who survives to bewail his Loss. With Hopes full of Immortality he changed this Life for a Better. May 13. 1742. in the 57th Year of his Age.

All the Works he made publick have met with good Reception; particularly the *Lectures upon the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds*; and the *Rational Illustration of the Common Prayer*; which has had no less than seven Editions. This Success encourages the Publication of those Discourses which he left behind him.

It was his own Desire, that the six Sermons, which he published in his Life-time, should be reprinted after his Death, and prefixed to those which he himself designed for

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for the Press, and which are now first offered to the World from his Original Manuscripts: And he employed a great Portion of the latter Part of his Life (in the weak State of Health he laboured under) to prepare them for that Purpose.

It is true he lived not fully to accomplish this Design, to finish and improve some of the Subjects treated of by him, in the Manner he intended: for which Reason the Discourses on our Lord's Temptations in the *first* Volume; on his Messiahship, and a Future State, in the *second*; and the Doctrine of Angels, in the *third*; must unavoidably appear defective. However, it was judged, those Discourses might be of considerable Use notwithstanding any such Defects; (and they may be said to be perfect as far as they go;) and it was presumed, the Reader would be better pleased to have them as they are, than not to have them at all. Whose Candour and Indulgence will also, it is hoped, be extended to the smaller Inaccuracies and Imperfections of a Posthumous Work, wherever they occur. And those very Imperfections will be of some Use, to shew the Fidelity with which these Sermons have been printed from the Original Manuscripts; no Liberty having been taken designedly to vary

from

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from them; except where it was necessary sometimes, for the connecting of a Sentence; as Vol. iii. p. 402. or to add a few Words, to avoid breaking off abruptly; as the last Paragraph at the End of that Volume, p. 403. The Author's last Paragraph, p. 402-3. being only designed, as the Foundation for the practical Uses which were to have followed after. I can bear Witness to this strict Regard to the Manuscripts, in a great Measure, from an ocular Inspection; and likewise, from the express Declaration of the Gentleman who undertook the Revival of Them, and the Direction of the Press, but died before he had finished his Undertaking.

As to any peculiar Notions, or over-curious Speculations; (which may possibly be observed in some Places;) the Harmlessness and Innocency of them, and the Ingenuity and Modesty with which they are proposed, will reasonably secure them of an easy Pardon, from those who may not, perhaps, approve of their Solidity.

In particular, as to what is advanced concerning *Prayers for the Dead*; (which may be thought most liable to Exception;) it should be considered, that somewhat of this kind is not only contained in *the Office for the Burial of the Dead*, but is also virtually included

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cluded in that Petition of the *Lord's Prayer*,
THY KINGDOM COME: And, as far as is
here pleaded for, is shewn to have no Con-
nexion with the Popish Doctrine of Purga-
tory, but to be inconsistent with it, and
even subversive of it. Vol. ii. p. 476-7-8.

But it will be necessary to make some Apo-
logy, and bespeak the Favour of the Courteous
Reader, in regard, not only to a Flight now
and then of the Author's Fancy, some small
Inaccuracies of Style, or slighter Errors of his
Pen; but also to the Errors of the Press,
which the Author is no Way concerned in,
and which these Sermons had never appear-
ed with, had he published them himself:
whose Expertness and Exactness had been
often tried on such Occasions.

To make the best Amends that could be,
for Mistakes of this kind; the chiefest *Errata*,
have been carefully corrected; though lesser
Faults in *Spelling*, *Pointing*, &c. have been
purposely passed over, which the Intelligent
Reader will easily observe, and the Candid
will excuse.

Among the Mistakes which have been
purposely passed over; the chief are those
relating to Texts of Scripture: some of which
are misplaced; being taken from the Margin,
of the Author, where the References were
exact,

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exact, and not so exactly inserted in the Body of the Book; as Vol. i. p. 35, 59, 60, &c. and some others, as the Psalms in Vol. iii. p. 350—353. were only inserted by some unaccountable Accident; and should be all erased, as wholly foreign to the Subject there treated of.

If any have the Curiosity to enquire, what Book is referred to, in the Sermons, upon *Hebr.* ix. 27. Vol. ii. and *Hebr.* xii. 1. Vol. iii. they may be informed, that, it is a Book of Devotion, written by a *Roman Catholick*, which has been several Times published as reformed by another Hand, and recommended by *Dr. Hicks*; and as reformed and put into another Method, by *Mr. Dorrington*; usually known, by the Name of *Hicks's*, and *Dorrington's Reformed Devotions*.

And now, having said thus much to prepare the Way; I shall no longer detain the Reader, from the Perusal of the Sermons of my very worthy Friend: and I make no Question, but others will receive great Pleasure and Improvement thereby, as I have found myself. 24 OCT 62

J. B.

CON.

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Preached, before the University of Oxford, Jan. 3. 1714.

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And it was so, when the Days of their Feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the Morning, and offered Burnt Offerings according to the Number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my Sons have sinned and cursed God in their Hearts. Thus did Job continually.

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2. *See, I have called by Name, Bezaleel, the Son of Uri, the Son of Hur, of the Tribe of Judah:*
3. *And I have filled him with the Spirit of GOD, in Wisdom, and in Understanding, and in Knowledge and in all Manner of Workmanship,*
4. *To devise cunning Works, to work in Gold, and in Silver and in Brass,*
5. *And in Cutting of Stones to set them, and in Carving of Timber, to work in all Manner of Workmanship.* 6.

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SERMON I.

The Lawfulness of Feasting, with the
Danger of Abusing it.

J O B i. 4. 5.

*Job's Sons went and feasted in their Houses,
every one his Day, and sent and called for
their three Sisters to eat and to drink with
them.*

*And it was so, when the Days of their Feast-
ing were gone about, that Job sent and
sanctified them, and rose up early in the
Morning, and offered Burnt Offerings ac-
cording to the Number of them all: for Job
said, It may be that my Sons have sinned
and cursed God in their Hearts. Thus did
Job continually.*

IN these and the foregoing Words is con- S E R M.
tained a short Account of *Job's Prosperity* ^{I.}
and Integrity before his Misfortunes: The
first of which is recorded to the end that we
may the better judge of the Weight and Bit-
terness

The Lawfulness of Feasting,

S E R M.

I.

terness of his Afflictions, which, we may reasonably suppose, received no small Addition from his being so long and constantly used to the Height of Happiness: The other to obviate any uncharitable Censure we might probably have entertained, and to caution us against imputing any thing to him, which might have drawn down this Adversity, which was laid upon him as a Trial and Probation of his Patience and Virtue. If we desire any general Character of this good Man, we have it in the first Verse, where we read that he was *perfect and upright, and one that feared GOD and eschewed Evil*: i. e. One whose Virtue appeared in a most unblameable Life, void of all Hypocrisy, both in his Piety towards God, and in his Dealings with Men. If we further demand some particular Instance of his Goodness, the Text will supply us, which contains an Account of his religious Care of his Children. They were from their Infancy, as we may reasonably suppose, educated in the Fear of God, and taught to live with one another in Love and Unity. And that this Friendship might continue inviolable, he indulged and encouraged his Sons to meet at some certain Seasons at each other's House, and to make a *Feast* every one in his Turn: And he, whose

with the Danger of abusing it.

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Turn it was to entertain the rest, was to in-^{SERM.}
vite *their three Sisters to eat and to drink with*^{I.}
them. It being usual, it seems, then as well
as now, to think the Obligation high enough,
if the Female Sex graced the Entertainments
made by the Men with their Presence, though
they were not at the Expence of entertaining
again. And this Feasting and Merriment a-
mongst his Children, *Job* thought doubtless a
proper Means to confirm and strengthen them
in their Amity and Concord. But because it
might possibly happen, that they might do or
speak something that was profane, or misbe-
coming their Religion at these Times, when
their Minds, loosened by Mirth, were less up-
on their Guard; their good Father never fail-
ed, as soon as ever the Time appointed for
their Feasting was over, to call upon his Sons
to reflect upon what had passed in those Inter-
vals of Mirth, and to prepare themselves for
the Sacrifices he intended to offer to avert God's
Anger, if by any means they had incurred it
during those Seasons: Exhorting them proba-
bly at the same time to recal themselves from
those Liberties which they had then been in-
dulging themselves in, and to apply them-
selves seriously to their Callings of Life, and
their wonted Duties of Religion. And this we

The Lawfulness of Feasting,

S E R M. must observe was *Job's* constant Practice; for
 I. so saith the Text, *Job's Sons went and feasted
 in their Houses, &c.*

The Words, thus paraphrased and explained, might be of manifold Use to us, if we would take notice of all the Rules they would afford us for the Regulation of our Lives. As,

First, For Instance, *Fathers of a Family* may from hence learn, how much it is their Duty, and ought to be their Care, to see that their Children and all others under their Tuition, be diligent Observers of their Duty to GOD.

Secondly, *Children* may again learn from hence, what an inestimable Blessing their Love and Unity is both to themselves and their Parents. Add to this,

Thirdly, That Children are not exempted from their Obedience to their Parents, nor Parents discharged from their Care of their Children, though their Children may be removed from them, and settled in Families of their own. *Job's* Sons were obedient to the Call of their Father, and their Father sanctified and offered Burnt Offerings for them. Again,

Fourthly, All may observe that a bare Suspicion or Surmise that ourselves or any others under our Care have sinned, is a sufficient Reason

with the Danger of abusing it.

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Reason why we should humble ourselves and ^{S E R M.} seek Reconcilement with God for ourselves ^{I.} and them. *Job* was not certain that his Sons had transgressed; he only said, *It may be that they have sinned.* Once more and

Lastly, We may observe that it is not a few good Actions which will recommend us to God, but *Constancy and Perseverance.* *Job's* Care of his Children had not been recorded unless it had been his constant Practice: *But thus did Job continually.*

These and several other Things might be drawn from the Text well worthy our Observation, which yet it must suffice to have only mentioned at present; and that because the Words suggest to our Minds three other Considerations, which will make a more reasonable Subject for my present Discourse. And they are,

I. FIRST, That *Feasting, Mirth and Society* are not inconsistent with the Practice of Virtue and Religion. *Job's Sons* (it is to be supposed with the Approbation and Consent of their good Father) *went and feasted in their Houses every one his Day, and sent and called for their three Sisters to eat and to drink with them.*

B 3

II. SE-

SERM.
I.

II. SECONDLY, That there is notwithstanding, great *Danger of offending* at such Seasons. *Job said, It may be that my Sons have sinned and cursed GOD in their Hearts. And therefore,*

III. THIRDLY, That after such Seasons, it ought to be the Duty of every Person to *reflect* upon his Behaviour as to what had passed, and to *examine* himself and those under his Care, in order to *atone* for what has been done amiss, and *reconcile* himself and them to GOD. *And it was so, when the Days of their Feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified his Sons, and rose up early in the Morning, and offered Burnt Offerings according to the Number of them all.*

I. The FIRST Thing then which the Words of the Text suggest to our Minds as more especially seasonable to be treated of at present is, That *Feasting, Mirth and Society* are not inconsistent with the Practice of Virtue and Religion. And this I say we may infer from the Practice of *Job's Sons*, who *went and feasted in their Houses every one his Day, and sent and called for their three Sisters to eat*
and

with the Danger of abusing it.

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and to drink with them. And that this was ^{SERM.}
with the Indulgence, Consent and Approba-
tion of their good Father we have very good
reason to believe: It is set down as one of the
chief Blessings of *Job's* Life, and doubtless it
could be no small Comfort to a Father to see
such Tokens of Love and Amity among his
Children. From hence then we learn that a
freer Conversation than ordinary, and a more
plentiful Use of God's good Creatures than is
at all times requisite, is sometimes a Thing
lawful in itself, and not repugnant to the Du-
ties of Religion. But how often and upon
what Occasions we may allow ourselves this In-
dulgence, does not appear from the Text: All
which it says is that *Job's Sons went and feasted
in their Houses every one his Day*: But what
is there meant by *Day* is not so clear. Some
Interpreters indeed understand by it their *Birth-*
day, and tell us that *Job's* Sons, every one up-
on his own *Birth-day*, made a Feast and En-
tertainment for the rest of his Brethren: and
That indeed carries with it something of Pro-
bability; because at the Beginning of the third
Chapter of this Book *Job* is said to *curse his
Day*, which from the following Verses appears
to have been his *Birth-day*. But notwithstand-
ing this, other Interpreters again would per-

SERM. I. suade us that these Seasons of their Feasting were upon other solemn Occasions, and in Commemoration of some *Spiritual* Blessings which they celebrated at certain Times agreed upon amongst themselves. Which of these to depend on we cannot tell, I shall therefore shew from other Instances what Times are most convenient and suitable for the Business we are discoursing of.

And here the uninterrupted Examples of Holy Men in all Ages will be undoubtedly a safe and sufficient Guide for us to follow, especially in such Things as were allowed and commanded by God. To begin then with God's peculiar People the *Jews*, we find amongst them many Occasions of Joy and Feasting: Some of which were stated and continual, and related to them as a Nation; and others only accidental and peculiar to private Families and Persons. The first of these were what they were under an indispensable Obligation of observing; they being appointed and commanded by the express Word of God, who was pleased to make the Observation of them an essential Part of their Religion. Of these, besides the Weekly Return of the *Sabbath*, they had several Yearly ones, as the Feast of *Passover*, of *Pentecost*, of *Trumpets*, of *Tabernacles*

with the Danger of abusing it.

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cles and the like. Most of these Feasts lasted SERM.
I
for seven Days together; during which Time, besides the more solemn Duties which they were then especially obliged to, they were not allowed to eat any *Leavened Bread*, nor to do any *servile Work*, but were commanded to *re-joice before the LORD their God*, and to *make a Feast unto the LORD*. The Occasions of these Festivals we all know, or may easily inform ourselves of, by consulting the Law which abounds with Statutes relating to them. I shall therefore only observe further, that they were all celebrated in Commemoration of some signal Mercies bestowed upon That People, and may therefore be a fit Precedent to us Christians, to appoint as solemn Festivals upon as solemn Occasions. For if They, by the express Command of God, celebrated the *Pass-over* every Year in Commemoration of his smiting the *Egyptians*, and delivering them from a *Temporal* Bondage; sure we have much more Reason to sanctify an *Easter* in Remembrance of the Rising of *Jesus Christ* from the Dead, who thereby overcame our *Spiritual* Enemies, *Death* and the *Grave*. If again the Feast of *Pentecost* was of great Eminency among the *Jews* in Memory of the *Mosaick Law's* being at that Time given on Mount Sinai;

SERM. *Sinai*; a *Whitsunday* ought surely to be of no
 I. less Note amongst us, who on the same Day
 received the new *Evangelical Law* from Heaven, by the Administration of the *Holy Ghost*, descending in the visible Appearance of *fiery Tongues*, and conferring miraculous Powers upon the Blessed Apostles. If lastly the Dwelling of the Children of *Israel* in *Booths*, when the LORD brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*, was by the Divine Wisdom thought worthy to be kept in perpetual Remembrance by a Feast of *Tabernacles*; shall not GOD's Humbling Himself to become *Flesh* and to *Tabernacle* with us, deserve a *Christmas*, to be solemnized by a Christian Festival? In these and all other Cases, the Mercies the *Jews* so solemnly commemorated, were only Figures of those Blessings which we Christians enjoy: Why then are some Men so warm and zealous to deny that Honour to the Substance, which was so strictly commanded to be given to the Shadows?

But another End of my taking Notice of the Practice of the *Jews* in this Case, was to let you see, that those Feasts which GOD Himself commanded did not consist barely of a *Spiritual Joy* and thankful Commemoration of his Mercies, expressed only by some more solemn

with the Danger of abusing it.

II

lemn Sacrifices than were at other Times usual, as some would have us believe; but outward Testimonies of this Joy were also required, such as was *their Abstaining from Leavened Bread, their Resting from their Labour, their Rejoicing before the LORD their God, and their making a Feast unto the LORD.* As to those Festivals which were instituted by the Jews themselves afterwards, we find these Actions more expressly commanded: In the Feast of *Purim*, instituted by *Mordecai*, Every Generation, every Family, every Province and every City were ordered to make them *Days of Feasting and Joy, and of sending Presents one to another, and of Gifts to the Poor*, Esth. ix. 21, 22. And again, the Feast of the *Dedication*, (that Feast which our Lord Himself honoured with his Presence, *John x. 22.*) was to be kept in it's Season from Year to Year—*with Mirth and Gladness*, 1 Macc. iv. 59. And so doubtless ought our Feasts to be celebrated, if we would duly observe them: If we imitate the *Jews* in one respect, we ought to do it in the other: If we set apart set Times and Seasons to commemorate any Blessings God has vouchsafed us, we ought also at such Times to do as they did, *i. e. to do no servile Work, but to rejoice before the LORD our God,*

SERM.

I.

The Lawfulness of Feasting,

SERM. God, and to make a Feast unto the LORD:

I.

To make them Days of Feasting and Joy, and of sending Presents one to another, and of Gifts to the Poor. And if we search the Records of the Church even from the very Infancy of *Christianity*, we shall find that whatever Times have been set apart either for the Remembrance of some special Mercies of God, such as the *Birth* and *Resurrection* of our *Saviour*, the *Descent* of the *Holy Ghost*, &c. or in Memory of the great *Heroes* of our Religion, such as were the Blessed *Apostles* and other *Saints*, who were the happy Instruments of conveying to us the Knowledge of *Christ Jesus*, by preaching his Gospel throughout the World, and attesting the Truth of it with their Blood; I say whatever Days have been observed upon any of these Accounts, have been constantly celebrated with Mirth and Gladness. But I need not here descend to Particulars: For our Reason will convince us, that Feasting and Mirth are so far from being inconsistent with the Duties required of us on these Occasions; as that they are very significant Parts of the Solemnity. Besides, the Strictness of the Union between *Soul* and *Body* makes them so nearly concerned for the Good of each other, that as they make but one Person, so we endeavour

to

with the Danger of abusing it.

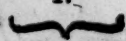
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to make them join and act as one in all other ^{S E R M.}
Duties of Religion. When we appoint any ^{I.}
Time to meditate and reflect upon our Sins,
in order to afflict our Souls; we withdraw, or
at least we ought to withdraw from our Bo-
dies also their usual Sustenance, in order to pu-
nish and bring them under. When again we
present our Souls in Prayer, we humble our
Bodies upon their Knees: And so in the Per-
formance of all other Christian Duties the
Body is required to bear a Part with the Soul:
And therefore when the *Soul* is engaged in a
thankful and joyful Commemoration of some
Blessing received, I cannot but think that the
Body is also expected to be cheerful and plea-
sant.

But I must not take up too much Time
upon this First Head; Nor yet may I omit to
take notice that there may be some other Oc-
casions, as well as these more solemn ones, of
Joy and Feasting. A *Family* may be blessed
with some particular Mercy; or a *Single Per-
son* may have a just and peculiar Reason to re-
joice. *Laban* may very seasonably gather to-
gether all the Men of his place, and make a
Feast, Gen. xxix. 22. at the Marriage of his
Daughter: And our Blessed *Saviour* himself
was pleased not only to be present at such a
Feast,

S E R M. Feast, but even to begin his *Miracles* with

I.  providing *Wine* for the Guests, *John* ii. 1—11. *Samson* again, according to the *Usage* of the young Men of his Time, may make a Feast, *Judges* xiv. 10. when he brings his Wife home: And if *Elizabeth* bring forth a Son, her Neighbours and her Cousins may very innocently rejoice with her, *Luke* i. 58. *Abraham* may make a great Feast the same Day that *Isaac* is weaned, *Gen.* xxi. 8. And if a Son for some Time prove a Prodigal, a Father may kill a fatted Calf, *Luke* xv. 23—27. at his Return. *Pharaoh* and *Herod* may be expected to treat their Nobles on their Birth-days, *Gen.* xl. 20. *Mark* vi. 21, &c. *Abraham* and *Lot* may make Entertainments for the Reception of Strangers, *Gen.* xviii. 1—12. xix. 3; and thereby they and others have entertained Angels unawares, *Heb.* xiii. 2. And *Joseph* may send Messes to his Brethren, who without Offence may drink and be merry with him, *Gen.* xliiii. 34. In a word, at the Conclusion of a kind and plentiful Harvest, *Exodus* xxiii. 16. at the End of a Sheep-Shearing, 2 *Sam.* xiii. 23—28. in making Leagues and Covenants, *Gen.* xxvi. 30. xxxi. 53. and on such other like Occasions, Feasting and Mirth are suitable and seasonable, and have, from
the

the very first Ages of the World (as appears ^{S E R M.}
from the Holy Scriptures) been always used ^{I.} 
at those Times.

I have now done with the First Head of my Discourse, upon which I have been the more particular, because I know there are some who cry down all *external* Feasting and Mirth as *carnal* and *unlawful*, allowing of none but a *Spiritual* Feasting and Joy upon these or any other Occasions. But I am not insensible on the other hand, that they are but the least Part of Mankind who entertain any Scruples of this Nature; but few who want to be persuaded of the *Lawfulness* of Feasting, or to be informed in the *Seasons* when it is proper to do it. Most People, on the contrary, are forward enough to lay hold of such Occasions, and apt to give themselves too much Liberty and Freedom. Lest therefore any thing that has been said, should be thought to countenance or encourage any Person's Looseness or Licentiousness; I shall now proceed to shew,

II. SECONDLY, That, though Feasting and Mirth are Things in themselves consistent with the Practice of Virtue and Religion;
there

SERM. there is notwithstanding great *Danger of of-*
 I: *fending* at such Seasons. Though *Job's* Sons
 had been educated without doubt in the Fear
 of God, and so probably had as much Guard
 upon themselves at such Times as good Men
 generally have; yet the Dangers and Temp-
 tations which their Father knew they were
 exposed to, made him fear they might not-
 withstanding do or say something misbecom-
 ing their Religion: *It may be, saith he, that*
my Sons have sinned and cursed GOD in their
Hearts. What I intend to offer to you by
 way of Consideration upon this Second Head
 of my Discourse, shall be taken up in shewing
 you by what Ways we may abuse this Liber-
 ty, and what Danger we are all of us in of
 running into one or other of those Abuses. In
 order to which it may not be improper to ob-
 serve,

First, That Feasting and Mirth are Things
 so pleasing and agreeable to Human Nature;
 that we are often too apt to desire and use
 them at *improper Seasons.* And this makes us
 very frequently indulge ourselves in Joy and
 Festivity, even at those Times, in which the
 Church calls us to 'Humiliation and Repen-
 tance. But this is certainly an Abuse of our
 Liberty; the very Actions of Feasting and
 Mirth

Mirth, however lawful in themselves, yet cease-
ing to be so when used unseasonably. *To every* SERM.
I.
Thing (saith the Wiseman) there is a Season,
and a Time to every Purpose under the Heaven:
A Time to weep, and a Time to laugh, a Time
to mourn, and a Time to dance, Ecclef. iii. 1, 4.
Mirth and Chearfulness are very unsuitable up-
on a Day of Mourning, and so is Eating and
Drinking upon an appointed Fast. On such
Times as these it is our Duty to afflict our
Souls with Grief and Sorrow, which it is im-
possible for us to do, if at the same Time we
cheer and elevate our Bodies. How displeas-
ing this is to the Divine Will, we may learn
from the Severity of that Judgment which
God denounced against the *Jews* for such un-
timely Joy. *In that Day (saith the Prophet)*
did the Lord GOD of Hosts call to Weeping
and to Mourning, and to Baldness, and to gird-
ing with Sackcloth: And behold Joy and Glad-
ness, slaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating
Flesh and drinking Wine: Let us eat and drink,
for to morrow we die. And it was revealed in
mine Ears by the LORD of Hosts. Surely this
Iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye
die, saith the Lord GOD of Host, Isa. xxii.
12, 13, 14. The very Actions therefore of
Joy and Feasting cease to be lawful, if used

S E R M.

I.

on any Day, or during any Season which the Wisdom of the Church has thought fit to set apart for Duties of a contrary Nature. And yet how often are we overswayed at those Times to frequent Places of Diversion, and even to seek for and appoint Times of Jollity and Merriment? But,

Secondly, Feasting does not only become unlawful at improper Seasons, but also when it is used *too frequently*. It is set down as an Aggravation of the Rich Man's Sin in the Parable, that *he fared sumptuously every Day*, Luke xvi. 19. He by that Means deprived himself of the Opportunities he might otherwise have had, of being touched with the Sense of that Distress and Want, which the *Beggar* at his Gate as daily laboured under. For I cannot but think it is the Duty of every Christian, of those especially whom God has blessed with Plenty in the World, to make themselves a little sensible of the Hardships which others are forced to undergo; and even sometimes to submit themselves, as far as their Circumstances will allow them, to a fellow-feeling of their Necessities. Such a voluntary Refusal now and then of some of the Comforts of Life would make them have a more thankful Esteem of the Blessings they enjoy, and incline them

them to contribute a little, of what they would be otherwise too apt to spend upon Superfluities, to the Relief of the Poor. But they who *sare sumptuously every Day*, who make their whole Life, as it were, one continued Festival, lose this Advantage; being perfectly ignorant of the innumerable Hardships the inferior Part of the World undergo, and consequently not knowing how to prize that Plenty, they themselves every Day partake of. And therefore certainly this is another Abuse of Feasting, since we thereby make the Blessings of Life become Instruments and Occasions of our Unrighteousness. But further,

A *Third Means* by which we offend in our Feasting, is, when we only entertain *Persons of our own or a superior Rank and Quality*, and neglect them who are most capable of being benefited by our Hospitality: Forgetting that Injunction and Instruction of our Lord, in which he teaches us who would be the most proper Guests at our Feasts: *When thou makest a Dinner or a Supper, saith he, call not thy Friends nor thy Brethren, neither thy Kinsmen, nor thy Rich Neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and Recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a Feast, call the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, the Blind; and thou shalt be blessed;*

The Lawfulness of Feasting,

SERM. *for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be*
 I. *recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just,*

Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14. I do not mention this to intimate that the Inviting of our Equals or Superiors to our Feasts is unlawful: Far from it; it is most certainly a very commendable Testimony of our Amity and Friendship: But what I mean is, that the confining our Hospitality to those only who are able to return it, contradicts the Design of our Festivals; one End of which is undoubtedly that they who live in Plenty at all Times of the Year, should, at the more solemn Seasons of it, spread their Tables, or at least distribute some Provisions to those who have scarce a Sufficiency at other Times. This is a Duty that even Humanity requires of us; and it was the Neglect of this which brought the Rich Man to his Place of Torment: *He fared sumptuously every Day, whilst the Beggar lay at his Gate desiring to be fed with the Crumbs which fell from his Table,* Luke xvi. 19, &c. The Poor therefore and the Needy are at such Times either to be invited to, and fed from, the Tables of the Rich; or else are to have their own Tables supplied more comfortably than usual, by their Largeſs and Gifts. For Christians surely ought not to come behind the *Jews* in Acts of Mer-

cy and Compassion, who always *made their* SERM.
I.
Days of Feasting Times of sending Gifts to the
Poor, and Portions to them for whom nothing
was prepared, Nehem. viii. 10. Esther ix. 22.

And certainly we give the greatest Testimony of our Love to our Lord for the Blessings we commemorate, when we endeavour at such Times to relieve the Necessities of his distressed Brethren, and so give them also an Opportunity of Rejoicing, since they are equally with ourselves concerned in the Occasions of our Joy.

[The Exclusion therefore of the Poor from partaking of our Feasts is certainly an Abuse, since it contradicts the Design of them: And yet it is very observable that at these Times we are often moved more by Vanity than Hospitality; the Promotion of Charity and good Neighbourhood being the least Thing we aim at. How frequently do we invite one another, not so much out of Love and Friendship, as a Desire of emulating and outrivalling one another in our Entertainments? Let our Circumstances be never so difficult, yet the Entertainment at our Neighbour's Table must be equalled at least, if not exceeded, at our own; lest the World should think us more sparing or less genteel than our Neighbours, a Thing now-a-days we cannot bear the Thoughts of.

S E R M. But this is not to feast for Love and Unity,
 I. but for Strife and Contention, and consequently is what renders our Feasts very unacceptable both to God and Man. For it is very apparent that nothing is more contrary to the true End of Hospitality than this Sort of Extravagance, whereby instead of benefiting our Neighbours we injure ourselves, overcharging our Estates, and wasting our Substance, only to gratify a foolish, ambitious Desire of seeming Great and Splendid. An Affectation of which Vanity has occasioned the Ruin of many Families, who, through these Means, and these Means only, have reduced themselves and their Dependants to Want and Beggary; whereas if they had contained themselves within the Bounds of Moderation, they might have supported as many as they have entirely ruined. But I must not run out too far upon one Particular; and shall therefore now proceed to consider]

A *Fourth* and more universal and common Abuse of Feasting, and that is the *Intemperance* and *Impiety* which are generally the Attendants of it. And indeed it is not to be wondered at, that Excess and Profaneness should be such constant Attendants upon our Feasting and Mirth, when the Dangers of them

them are so great, and yet Men come so little prepared against them. To desire God's Blessing upon his Creatures which we are going to partake of, or to dart up an Ejaculation, that he would vouchsafe to preserve us in a moderate Use of them, is now looked upon, in too many Families, as precise and formal: How then can it be otherwise expected, but that they who trust in their own Strength, and think it beneath them to ask for the Divine Assistance, should sink into the Follies of degenerate Nature? But Men look upon a Festival now-a-days as a Licence for their Extravagance; and to say it is a *Holy-day*, is thought a sufficient Excuse for Surfeiting and Drunkenness. But this is quite the Reverse of true Feasting, and what quite overthrows the End and Design of it. For this is not to keep a Day *holy*, but to take the Opportunity of the Leisure of it to waste and consume it in Intemperance and Debauchery: This is not to commemorate a Mercy or Blessing, but to neglect and despise it: not the way to apply the Benefits of it to ourselves, but to make ourselves incapable of being the better for it: and consequently, without Repentance, we bring ourselves under a more miserable Condition, than if the

SERM. Mercy had never been offered to us. In a

I.

word, *This is such a profane and open Contempt of God's Mercies, that he singled it out himself by the Prophet to denounce his Judgments against it. Woe, saith he, unto them that rise up early in the Morning that they may follow strong Drink, and continue unto Night until Wine inflame them. And the Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and the Pipe, and Wine are in their Feasts, but they regard not the Work of the LORD, neither consider the Operation of his Hands, Isa. v.*

II, 12.

And I can't forbear observing further, that idle and loose Discourse will be the natural Result of debauched and wicked Tempers: Oaths and Blasphemy, Ribaldry and Profaneness, Slandering and Backbiting, is the only Conversation such Company can relish. But certainly a Festival is the most improper time, if there be any one more so than another, for Discourses of this Nature. The Design of our meeting at such Times should be to congratulate one another upon the Mercy we commemorate, and to warm and enflame each other's Affections and Devotions with suitable Discourses: And therefore to single out these Times for wanton and irreligious Conver-

Conversation, is so profane and impious, as ^{S E R M.}
one should tremble to think of it. _{I.}

These are the Abuses which I have chosen to mention, as being so apparently sinful that there is not a Shadow of an Excuse to be urged for them. Notwithstanding which, the Dangers of running into them are no small ones. Our own Inclinations, the Force of Temptation, and the Enticements of Company, are so prevalent over some or other of us, that there is scarce any of these Sins but what we have, most of us, at some Time or other been guilty of. To convince ourselves of this, let us only call to Mind any one Occasion of Mirth, we have had and made Use of, which we can particularly remember; and then let us reflect upon our Behaviour at that Time, and examine ourselves whether we have avoided every one of these Abuses, whether we have escaped clear from them all, or whether we have not said or done something which we now condemn ourselves for. And if after such Examination, there are but few who can acquit themselves, but few who can declare themselves entirely innocent; then I hope I may look upon this Second Head of my Discourse as sufficiently made out, *viz.*
That

SERM. I. That notwithstanding *Feasting, Mirth, and Society* are Things in themselves consistent with the Practice of Virtue and Religion; yet there is *great Danger of offending* at such Seasons. And this naturally leads me to the Consideration of the last Thing the Text suggests to us, *viz.*

III. THIRDLY, That therefore after such Seasons, it ought to be the Duty of every Person to *reflect* upon his Behaviour as to what has passed, and to *examine* himself and those under his Care, in order to *atone* for what has been done amiss, and to *reconcile* himself and them to God. And this we learn from the Practice of *Job*, who, *when the Days of their Feasting were gone about, sent and sanctified his Sons, and rose up early in the Morning, and offered Burnt Offerings according to the Number of them all.*

The Words indeed relate immediately to that Care which a *Father* ought to have over his *Children* at such Times: But without straining them, we may infer from the same Words, that it is the Duty of every Person to reflect upon *his own* Conduct upon such Occasions: It being certainly as much every Man's Duty to take Care of himself, as it is

to watch over others. If therefore *Job sent* SERM.
I.
and sanctified his Sons, when the Days of
their Feasting were gone about; we ought
also to sanctify ourselves after the same Oc-
casions.

The Necessity of this Duty naturally arises
from what has been said upon the foregoing
Head. I have there shewed that there are
several Ways by which this Liberty may be
abused, and that the Proneness of our Na-
ture, and the Force of Temptation, make
us all too apt to run into those Abuses. But
how strong soever the Temptations may be,
the Abuses are certainly Sins, and as such must
be repented of: But we cannot repent of
them without knowing the Particulars; nor
can we know the Particulars without a strict
Examination into our Conduct and Behavi-
our after the Time is over. It very seldom
happens that at the very Instant of our Mirth
we are sufficiently observant of all that passes.
Our Minds will be attentive to such Diversi-
ons as are customary upon the Occasions;
and therefore it can scarce be expected that
we can always be so strict upon our Guard,
as not to let something, at least misbecoming,
slip from us unawares. If then, notwith-
standing our utmost Resolution and Precaution,

it

SERM.

I.

it is very difficult to keep ourselves entirely innocent at the Instant of our Mirth ; it will follow of Course that we ought to examine our selves after the time is expired. But the Reasonableness of this Duty is so obvious, that I cannot but think it needless to enlarge any further upon it. And therefore I shall only ask your Patience a little longer whilst I apply what has been said and so conclude.

Under the *First* Head then has been shewed, that there are some Occasions on which *Feasting* and *Mirth* are *lawful* and *expedient*, and in some measure a part of our *Duty*. And such an Occasion we have now had. We have been commemorating the *Birth of Christ*, which is certainly a Mercy of such a Magnitude (whether we consider our own Wants, which could be repaired by no other means ; or whether we reflect upon the Strangeness of the Way, and the Goodness as well as the Wisdom of God in designing it ;) that it cannot deserve less than an *Annual Commemoration*. And if any Blessing be to be commemorated with *Joy* and *Gladness*, this ought undoubtedly to be so : The *Angel*, who brought the first news of it, expressed it by *good Tidings of great Joy*, which
should

should be to all People, Luke ii. 10 : And as SERM.
I.
a Precedent of this Joy, the whole Heavenly Host joined together in that Divine Song, *Glory to GOD in the Highest, on Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men, Luke ii. 14.* And therefore when they are our Copies and Examples, we can do no less than, on the Anniversary Return of that time, endeavour to imitate them, especially since the Blessing much more nearly concerns us than them. Nor do I doubt but that all of us have used such outward Expressions of our Joy as we have thought convenient and suitable: Our Tables have been spread with plenty of Provisions, and our Rooms filled with numbers of Guests. *The Harp, and the Viol, the Tabret and Pipe, and Wine have been in our Feasts,* and nothing I presume has been wanting that could contribute to our Mirth. All therefore that is to be feared is, lest we have exceeded the Bounds of a Christian Festival, and suffered our Joy to evaporate into Extravagance. For we have heard under

The *Second Head*, that the *Dangers of offending* at such Seasons are great, and the *Temptations* many. And if we be at any time more apt than ordinary to abuse our Liberty; it is at the solemn Festival we are now discouraging

SERM.
I.

coursing of. How it comes to pass I know
 not; but so it is, that we are most of us in-
 fected with a Notion, that this Season not only
 excuses, but even justifies, our allowing our
 selves in such Irregularities and Extravagancies
 of Life, as we ourselves should be ashamed of
 at any other time. But certainly if we con-
 sider of it, this is the most improper Season,
 if there can be any one more so than another,
 for Sensuality and Intemperance. The My-
 stery we now commemorate is the *Birth of*
the Son of GOD, who was made manifest for
this purpose, that He might destroy the Works
of the Devil. Can any thing then be more
 absurd, than that we should waste the time
 of this Holy Season in the practice of those
 wicked Works which he came to destroy?
 That we should so far forget, or so little con-
 sider the Design of his Coming, as to live and
 act in direct Opposition to it?

But it may be, you will think this Advice
 comes a little too late; and that it is very
 improper to caution People against abusing a
 Festival after the time is expired. In answer
 to which it may be said, that this Advice
 need not, unless we will make it so, be with-
 out its use now. For if we were so prone
 to exceed the Bounds of Temperance and So-
 briety

briety at the time it self, it will follow, from SERM.
I.
thence, as has been shewed under the

Third Head, That we ought to make the strictest Enquiry and Examination whether we have not done so, now the time is over. We see that the Days of his Sons Feastings were no sooner over, but Job rose up early in the Morning and sent and sanctified them. He lost no time, not so much as deferred a Day. If therefore we have followed the Example of his Sons in one respect, we ought to copy after their good Father in the other: If we have Feasted in our Houses, every one our Day, and sent and called for our Neighbours to eat and to drink with us; We ought, now the Days of our Feasting are gone about, to rise up early in the Morning, and to offer Burnt Offerings according to the Number of us all: i. e. we should every one of us examine into our past Behaviour, and endeavour to atone for whatever may have been rashly committed, or have inconsiderately slipped from us, since it may be, notwithstanding all our Caution, that we have sinned and cursed GOD in our Hearts. This will certainly have that good Effect upon us, as to make us more watchful over our selves for the Future, and not so apt to give the Reins to our unreasonable Inclinations.

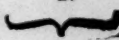
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tions. Besides which, we have this further Advantage from an early Examination, that our Slips and Errors will not so soon have escaped us, but that, by a little Reflection, we may soon call them to mind : Whereas when we go on for any considerable time unexamined, one Sin may drive out another, and so a great many Sins go unrepented of : Our Memory, for the generality, being very frail where it is irksome to us to have it otherwise.

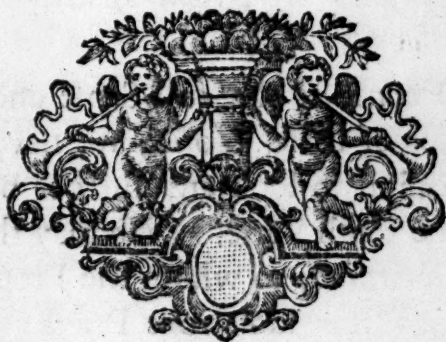
I shall only add one thing more, and that is, that a bare *Suspicion* that we have sinned and offended God, during this Season, is ground enough to seek Reconcilement with Him. *Job* only said, *It may be* that my Sons have sinned, but yet That he thought a sufficient Reason why he should *send and sanctify them*. And I fear there are very few of us, but of whom it may be said without Offence, *It may be* that we have sinned : And therefore, though we may not accuse our selves in our present Thoughts of any Offence ; yet the bare Possibility of having offended should be sufficient to prompt us to the Examination I have been discoursing of : That so whatever we may have been guilty of, in commemorating the *First Coming* of our Lord in *Humility*, may be forgiven us upon our Repen-

with the Danger of abusing it.

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Repentance, and all of us be admitted to meet ^{S E R M.}
Him at His *Second Coming in Glory*, with Joy ^{I.} 
and Gladness.

Which GOD of his Infinite Mercy grant for
the sake of the same, his most dearly be-
loved Son *Jesus Christ* our Lord, to whom
with the Father, and the Holy Ghost,
be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour and
Glory Might, Majesty and Dominion, now
and for ever. *Amen.*



VOL. I.

D

SERMON

SERMON, II.

The Schools of the PROPHETS.

AMOS vii. 14, 15.

Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's Son; but I was an Herdman, and a Gatherer of Sycomore Fruit.

And the LORD took me, as I followed the Flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my People Israel.

SERM.
II.

TO come at the full Sense and Meaning of these Words, we have no Occasion to look any further backward than to the tenth Verse. We may there read that this *Amaziah*, to whom the Prophet here speaks, was the idolatrous Priest of *Bethel*, which was one of the High-Places where *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Nebat*, had erected a Calf for the Ten Tribes to worship, to prevent their returning to their Allegiance to the King

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King of *Judah*, 1 Kings xii. 26, &c. which ^{S E R M.} they would have been apt to have done, had ^{II.} they still continued to go up, as formerly, to do Sacrifice in the House of the Lord at *Jerusalem*. The occasion of the Answer, which *Amos* makes to *Amaziab*, was a Complaint of that Priest against the Prophet, for preaching against the Idolatry committed at these Places, and denouncing for that Reason, *Destruction with the Sword*, Amos vii. 9. against the House of *Jeroboam*, then King of *Israel*. This, we must be sensible, must very nearly concern the Interest, as well as the Honour, of *Amaziab*: Insomuch that it is no wonder if he should endeavour, by the best Stratagem he could contrive, to rid himself of so troublesome and dangerous an Adversary. He therefore sends a Complaint of him to the King, and, the more effectually to bring upon him the Royal Displeasure, accuses him of Sedition, Conspiracy and Treason: Allegations of this Nature, as they are founded upon Malice, must be supported with Lies: And so the Context informs us this was. *Amos*, as I have observed, had threatened the House of *Jeroboam* with *Destruction by the Sword*: Not that the Prophet spake maliciously against the King, but as tenderly forewarning him of a

SERM.
II.

Judgment that God himself had denounced, and which was soon after fulfilled against his Son *Zachariah* by the Hands of *Shallum* the Son of *Nabesh*, 2 Kings xv. 10. However, this, *Amaziah* thought, would not nearly enough affect *Jeroboam* himself, to raise his Indignation against the Prophet: The Story therefore must be improved; and what the Prophet had denounced against his *House*, must be reported to the King as if threatened to his *Person*. Amos vii. 10, 11. Then *Amaziah* the Priest of *Bethel* sent to *Jeroboam*, King of *Israel*, saying, *Amos* hath conspired against thee in the midst of the *House* of *Israel*: The Land is not able to bear all his Words. For thus *Amos* saith, *Jeroboam* shall die by the Sword, and *Israel* shall surely be led away Captive out of their own Land. How the King took this, and what Answer he made to it we do not read: But it seems from the next Words, that the Idolatrous Priest had Encouragement enough to insult the Prophet, and to forbid his appearing any more before the King. Also *Amaziah* said unto *Amos*, O thou Seer, go, flee thee away into the Land of *Judah*, and there eat Bread, and prophesy there: ver. 12. There perhaps thou wilt find more Encouragement, since there it is likely thy Prophe-

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SER M.
II.

cies will meet with more Regard : *But prophesy not again any more at Bethel, for it is the King's Chapel, and it is the King's Court.*

ver. 13. The Answer, which the Prophet returns to the Priest, is such as became the Mouth of one that spake by a superior Authority to that which forbade him : He gives him to understand, that the Judgments which he had denounced, he had denounced by the Divine Authority and Command ; and that conveyed to him not in the Course of the ordinary Way of training up to Prophecy, but by virtue of an immediate Inspiration and Call, which unsought and unexpected he had received from God : *Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's Son :* ver. 14. I was neither by Birth, nor by immediate Separation from the Womb, set apart, or consecrated to the Office of Prophecy ; nor had I my Education under a Prophet in any of their Colleges and Schools. *But I was an Herdsman, and a Gatherer of Sycomore Fruit ;* leading an humble, country Life, among Sheep-cotes and Folds, concerned for nothing but to provide Pasture for my Flock, thoughtless of any higher Condition or Employ, and void of any superior Knowledge or Skill. So far out of

S E R M. the ordinary Road of Prophets, ver. 15. *the*
 II. *LORD took me (saith he) as I followed the*
Flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, pro-
phesy unto my People Israel.

Thus the Prophet asserts and vindicates his Commission and Call; shews it to be independent upon any Power on Earth, and consequently that he was accountable for the Exercise of it to no Man. After which he concludes with repeating and confirming the Judgments he had denounced; but adding withal a particular Judgment against *Amaziah*, for daring to question and dispute his Authority: ver. 16, 17. *Now therefore hear thou the Word of the Lord; Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel, and drop not thy Word against the House of Isaac: Therefore thus saith the LORD, Thy Wife shall be an Harlot in the City; and thy Sons and thy Daughters shall fall by the Sword, and thy Land shall be divided by Line: And thou shalt die in a polluted Land, and Israel shall surely go into Captivity forth of his Land.*

This is both the Occasion and Meaning of the Text: But I have no Design to treat of it at present as it stands related to the Context, (in which Light it would afford us many useful

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ful Observations worthy to be insisted upon at another Time;) But I shall now consider the Words separately by themselves, and shall endeavour to make such Use of them only, as may be proper to the present Season and Solemnity : With this view, I shall observe

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I. In the FIRST Place, That here is a direct Intimation, that, even in the Ages of Inspiration, the *Jews* had settled *Colleges* or *Schools* for the *Education* of *Prophets*, and to fit and dispose them for the Reception of the Spirit.

II. SECONDLY, That here is also a tacit Concession, that God usually chose his Prophets from hence, and that none were *ordinarily* called to that Office, unless he had been trained up to it by such Education.

III. THIRDLY, That here is an Instance, that upon exercising this Office, without such preceding Preparation and Study, the Prophet was expected to be able to alledge an *immediate* Inspiration and Call from God.

These Heads therefore, with other Observations which they will suggest, and a suitable

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Appli-

S E R M. Application of the whole at last, I propose for
 II. the Subject of my present Discourse.

I. And FIRST I would observe that here is a direct Intimation, that, even in the Ages of Inspiration, the *Jews* had settled *Colleges* or *Schools* for the *Education* of *Prophets*, and to fit and dispose them for the Reception of the Spirit. This I take to be suggested by the very first Branch of *Amos's* Answer to *Amaziah*: *I was no Prophet*, (saith he) *neither was I a Prophet's Son*: a direct Implication that there were at that time in *Israel* not only *Prophets* but *Prophets Sons*. Now by the *Son of a Prophet*, it is plain from other Passages of Scripture, which I shall have Occasion to mention by and by, is to be understood one, who, under the Care and Direction of a Prophet, was educated or trained up as a Disciple or Scholar: If then a *Prophet's Son* be a *Prophet's Disciple*; it is reasonable we should understand by a *Prophet* in the Text, not only one who was actually endued with the Spirit of Prophecy (without which, be sure, a Man could not be a Prophet;) but one who was also engaged as a *Tutor* or *Instructor* to others. So that both Terms together seem plainly to intimate, not only that there was a
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Succession of Prophets among the *Jews*; but ^{SERM.}
also that they had the Care of Students under ^{II.}
them, whom they brought up in the Use of
Religious Exercises, such as might keep them
in a *fit Disposition for the Prophetick Spirit*,
if God should see Occasion to impart it to
them.

And indeed if we look back into the an-
cient Records both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, we
shall find plain Footsteps remaining of great
Preparations, which those Persons went
through, who offered themselves as Candi-
dates for the Spirit of Prophecy. As to the
Heathens, who sought only after a Spirit of
Divination, we are told of some very solemn
Ceremonies which they used, to fit themselves
for the Influx of their imaginary Deities, and
to call forth the Souls of dead Men into them-
selves to enable them to presage Things future
and contingent *. The *Heathens* indeed
are no proper Instances of the Preparations
that are necessary to the receiving an Influx
which is truly *Divine*: But since it may be
proved, that they used such Preparations, and
since most of the Rites, which were practised

* R. Albo. Maam. 3. c. 8. as cited by Smith in his Dis-
course of Prophecy c. 8. in his Select Discourses p. 240.

by

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by the *Heathens*, were taken up in Imitation of the Rites which the true God had prescribed to be observed in the Worship of Himself; it may not unfairly be presumed that those *Preparations*, which the *Gentiles* went through, to fit themselves for the receiving the Spirit of *Divination*, were in imitation or mimicry of some *preparatory Discipline*, which the *Jews* observed as necessary to fit themselves for the Spirit of *Prophecy*.

Not that we want Proofs amongst the *Jewish* Writers themselves, as well too amongst the inspired ones as those that were not, of regular *Colleges* or *Schools* set apart for training up Students to the Prophetick Office. Some of the *Modern Jews* indeed carry their Accounts of these Schools higher than they have any Authority to support them; pretending to trace them to *Abraham*, and to *Noah*, to *Seth*, and to *Adam* *. It is true the Spirit of Prophecy might more or less reside among the Patriarchs and others from the earliest Ages: And it has been inferred from the famous Prediction of *Moses*, viz. *The LORD*

* Vide Jacob. Alting. de Republica Hebræorum, p. 12. & Abendana of the Schools among the Hebrews in his Discourses of the Ecclesiastical and Civil Polity of the Jews, c. 5. p. 128. &c.

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thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken; Deut. xviii. 15.

It has been inferred, I say, from this Prediction, that the Prophetick Spirit was to be *continually* amongst them. It is certain indeed, those Words do principally and ultimately point at *Christ*, to whom St. Peter applies them, Acts iii. 22. But they have also been understood by very learned Men, of a *Succession* of Prophets: Since without such Succession the Completion of them would have been no Security or Defence to the present *Israelites* against Enchanters and Diviners, as they infer from the Context it was designed to be *. However, though the *Gift* and *Spirit* of Prophecy might be *always* amongst the *Jews*, yet the Instance of a *preparatory Exercise* and *Discipline* to qualify them for it, does not appear so ancient as the modern *Jewish* Writers are willing to believe.

* See Bishop Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr. l. 2. c. 4. §. 1. But other learned and judicious Writers (with whom I agree) confine this Prophecy to our Saviour only, and will allow no Succession of Prophets to be intended; nor admit any Connexion between this Verse and the foregoing Prohibition concerning the Heathen Diviners. See Mr. Bullock's Sermon at Norwich. And his Argument from Prophecy defended, p. 220—273. See also Bishop Sherlock's sixth Discourse on Prophecy. p. 185, &c. And Dr. Berriman's eighth Boyle's Lecture. p. 219—241. However, nothing in this Discourse depends on the Truth, either of one Side or the other.

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for this Purpose was probably about the Time of *Samuel*, when the Priests began to be very degenerate, and Men thereby became estranged from the Worship of God. So that there then seemed a Necessity for appointing such Schools for the better educating such as were designed for Religious Offices. So much is certain, that the first mention we meet with of any such College is in the Tenth Chapter of the *First Book of Samuel*; where there is an Account of *Saul's* meeting, and joining himself to, *a Company of Prophets at the Hill of God as they came down from the High-Place with Musick before them*, 1 Sam. x. 5, 10. What the Text expresses by *a Company of Prophets*, most Commentators, as well Jewish as Christian, agree to interpret of a Society of Students devoting themselves to a studious and religious Life under some Prophet who presided over them. Where and what this *Hill of God* was, is disputed by Interpreters: But the most probable Conjecture is, that it was in *Gibeah of Benjamin*, the Place where *Saul's* Father dwelt *; and that it was call-

* It is plain from v. 11, 13, 14. that this happened towards the End of *Saul's* Journey, where his Uncle dwelt, and where he himself was well known: And we also read in Ch. xiii. 2, 3. of a Garison of Philistines, which was kept in Gibeah.

ed the *Hill of God*, as well upon the Account of the Company of Prophets who had here dedicated themselves to the Service of God, as also because of its being a High-Place whereon the People were used to offer Sacrifice. However, it is certain that here was a Garison of the *Philistines* kept in the same Place, whom, though Enemies to the People, and the true Worship of God, *Grotius* observes to be preferable to many Christians since, in that in the Heat of their Conquests they were careful to preserve those Places from Rapine where Learned Men were employed in sacred Studies *. The Reason why these Prophets came down from the Hill with *Musick* before them, and the *Effect* which it had upon *Saul* when he met them, I shall have Occasion perhaps to mention in the Sequel. At present I shall go on to take Notice of some other *Colleges* or *Schools*, of which we have Mention in the sacred Writings. The next that occurs is in the Nineteenth Chapter of the same Book; where we read of a like *Company of Prophets at Naioth in Ramah, prophesying with Samuel, who stood as appointed over them, 1 Sam. xix. 20, &c.* and

* See *Grotius on the place, and de Jur. Bell. & Pacis. l. 3. c. 11. §. 10.*

whose

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whose Prophesying, it seems, had the same Power and Influence upon *Saul* and his Messengers, who came to apprehend *David*, as we read it had upon *Saul* himself before, at the *Hill of God*. After this again we read in the *Second Book of Kings* of several other such Schools in the Days of *Elijah*, and of his Successor *Elisha* : As in the Second Chapter, for instance, we have express Mention made of *the Sons of the Prophets that were at Bethel*, 2 Kings ii. 3, 5. and of others that were at *Jericho* : In the Fourth Chapter we have an Account of *Elisha's* coming to *Gilgal*, and of *the Sons of the Prophets* that were there sitting before him, c. iv. 38. And in the Fifth again we read of some *Sons of the Prophets who belonged to Mount Ephraim*, c. v. 22. Neither do we meet with them in *Israel* only, where perhaps Providence had chiefly placed them, in order to preserve the Purity of God's Worship, during the Defection of the Ten Tribes ; but *Judah* also was very probably not without them : Because, lastly, in the 22d Chapter of the same Book, (in our own Translation at least, and agreeably with the Paraphrase of *Jonathan*) there is Mention made of a *College, where a Prophetess dwelt at Jerusalem*, Ch. xxii. 14. So that it seems

as if they were dispersed through all the Cities of the *Israelites*, that they might be every where at Hand to instruct, or encourage, or reprove the People. And it is certain, that the whole Kingdom was so well supplied with them in the Reign of *Abab*, that one good Man alone (*Obadiab* by Name) had an Opportunity of hiding an Hundred of them at once, by Fifty in a Cave, from the Persecution of *Jezebel*, 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13. and that, after she had cut off and slew the main Body of them.

From the Places above cited, it will be easy to confirm what I have but barely hinted in the Opening of this Head : viz. that the *Sons of the Prophets* were their *Disciples* or *Scholars*. For they are mentioned we see as so numerous and frequent, that they could not be their Sons by *Nature* or *Birth* ; but were only so called upon the Account of their being brought up under their *Tutelage* and *Care* : A Relation that has been always indifferently expressed either by *Father* and *Son*, or by *Master* and *Disciple*. Accordingly, when one asks, *Who is the Father* of the Prophets at the Hill of God ? 1 Sam. x. 12. He is understood to mean, *Who is their Instructor or Teacher* ? And when *Elisha*, whom I shall shew

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shew to have been only the *Disciple of Elijah*, saw his Master taken from him, he called out to him in his Exclamation, *My Father, My Father*, 2 Kings ii. 12. In the same Sense we find our Saviour long afterwards calls his *Disciples* his *Children*, Mark x. 24. and St. *Paul* claims the Title of *Father* over the *Corinthians*, because in *Christ Jesus*, he had begotten them through the Gospel; 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15. whom therefore he stiles his *beloved Sons*; as immediately afterwards he also calls his Disciple *Timothy*, his *beloved and faithful Son in the Lord*, ver. 17. And in conformity hereunto, both the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, and the *Syriack Version*, in the Places above-mentioned, render what we translate the *Sons of the Prophets*, by the *Prophets Disciples*.

And indeed the whole Account that I shall give of these Prophets will be one continued Confirmation of this Exposition of that Phrase. However, since I am upon it, I shall first take Notice of two Places in particular, which seem most clearly to point out this Relation. The first is, where we have Mention of a *Company of Prophets at Naioth in Ramah*, and *Samuel standing as appointed over them*, 1 Sam. xix. 20. or, as *Jonathan* renders it, *Samuel standing, as teaching over them*, the other is, where

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where there is an Account of *Elisha's* return-^{SERM.}
ing to *Gilgal*, and of the *Sons of the Pro-*^{I.}
phets sitting before him, 2 Kings iv. 38. I
think it is not to be doubted, but that the
Sons of the Prophets and a *Company of Pro-*
phets are only two Terms used to denote the
same Order of Men : And that *Samuel*, *stand-*
ing as appointed, or teaching, over the one,
and the *sitting of the other before Elisha*, have
also the same Meaning belonging to each of
them ; viz. that *Samuel* and *Elisha* were as
Governors, Tutors and Instructors to their re-
spective *Pupils*. It is certain, that both
Terms exactly correspond to the Method
then used in the instructing of Disciples ;
which was for the Master to sit in an Emi-
nence above, and the Disciples upon a lower
Form at his Feet : In allusion to which, when
the Sons of the Prophets at *Bethel* and *Jericho*
would give Notice to *Elisha* of the Design of
the LORD to remove *Elijah* from him, they
express it by taking away his *Master from*
his Head, 2 Kings ii. 3, 5. And when *St. Paul*
gives the *Jews* an Account of his Education,
he tells them he was brought up *at the Feet*
of Gamaliel, Acts xxii. 3.

Having thus settled the *Relation* between
the *Prophets* and their *Sons*, and shewed that

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the one were the *Pupils* or *Disciples* of the other; let us in the next Place inquire into the *Methods* of their Education, and in what *Studies* and *Exercises* they were employed.

And here first it may be proper to begin with the Places of their *Habitation*: For it seems they did not pursue their Studies, each one separately by himself, at his own private Dwelling; but, for the Benefit and Advantage of publick Exercise and Discipline, united together into Societies and Communities, each of which had convenient Colleges for their Abode, where they lived under the Government of some noted Prophet, who was appointed, it is possible, by a Divine Election, to be their President or Head. For thus the Sons of the Prophets (at *Gilgal*, as it is supposed) lived with *Elisba*; and grew so numerous under so eminent a Master, as that the Place where they dwelt being at last too strait for them, they were forced to desire *Elisba's* Leave for the enlarging their Buildings, 2 *Kings* vi. 1, 2. Accordingly, with his Approbation and Consent, they lay a new Foundation upon the Banks of *Jordan*: A Place singled out for the same Reason, which, I suppose, moved the Prophets before-mentioned to fix their Residence at the *Hill of*

God,

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God, viz. because being remote from the Noise and Hurry of a Town, it was more suitable to a studious and contemplative Life. SERM.
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In these Places, it is probable, they not only lived, but also *commoned* together upon such Provisions as were there provided for them at the Direction of their President, or some Steward appointed for that Purpose. For so we find at the College of *Gilgal*, just now named, *Elisha* ordering *Pottage to be seethed for the Sons of the Prophets*, 2 Kings iv. 38. Upon which a learned Commentator * takes Occasion to observe, that the Food which was provided for them was plain and common; such as the Gardens and Fields would afford, without much Labour, and of small Price. Though might I presume to add my own Conjecture, I should impute the Plainness of the Provision here mentioned to the *Dearth*, which, we are told in the same Verse, was then in the Land, which might hinder the People from bringing in other Provision for their Support: For two or three Verses lower it looks as if they were maintained at the publick Expence; there being express Mention made of *twenty Loaves of Barley, Bread*

* *Bishop* Patrick.

SERM. II. *of the First Fruits, and full Ears of Corn in the Husk thereof,* verse 42. which were brought by one Man, in this Time of Scarcity, and offered to *Elisba* for the Use of his College.

This seems to have been their Manner and Way of Living, As to their *Employment*, we may be sure it was taken up in the Study of the Law, in the solemn Celebration of the Praises of God, in the Advancement of Piety, in the suppressing all irregular Emotions in the Soul, and in whatever else might fit and dispose them for any Part of the Prophetick Office. For I desire to use the Word *Prophecy*, not as it is restrained to signify the *foretelling future Events*; but in that large and extended Sense, in which it is used for the uttering or speaking any thing by Divine Authority, whatever Time it may respect, whether past, present, or to come. For even *Giving of Thanks and Praising God* with Songs and Instruments of *Musick* in the House of the LORD, is called *Prophefying with Harps, with Psalteries and Cymbals*, 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 6, 7. And if St. Paul use *Prophefying* in the same Sense, when he allows a *Woman to prophesy*, provided she does it *with her Head covered*, 1 Cor. xi. 5. it may not be difficult

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to reconcile that Passage of him with another, ^{SER M.} Ch. xiv. 14. in which he does not permit ^{II.} *Women to speak* (i. e. by way of Teaching or Instructing) but expressly enjoins them *to keep Silence in the Church.* But whatever might be the Meaning of the Apostle in that Place, it is certain, that the setting forth the Glory of God in Hymns of Praise, was one principal Part of the Exercise performed at the Prophetick Schools. For in this Sense must be understood the *Prophefying* before-mentioned, of the Company of Prophets at the Hill of God, *with a Psaltery, and a Tabret, and a Pipe, and a Harp,* 1 Sam. x. 5, 10. and also the *Prophefying* of the others at *Naioth in Ramah,* c. xix. 20. though there is no particular Mention made in this latter Place, of their Instruments of Musick. The Reason why this solemn Singing of Hymns has the Name of *Prophefying* given to it, was perhaps because their Songs were immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost, and suggested to the Prophets themselves as they sung *; though it might not unaptly be expressed by that Name, should the Matter of their Songs have been precomposed; if so be the first Au-

* See Bishop Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. l. 2. c. 4 §. 8.

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thors of them, (whoever they were) composed them originally by Divine Inspiration. For in that Passage of the *Chronicles*, which I mentioned but now, the Sons of *Asaph*, and of *Heman*, &c. are said to *prophecy* (as praising God with propheticall Composures) though the Psalms which they sung were beforehand endited by *David* for their Use *. And it is remarkable, that in the Account of the Company of Prophets prophesying at *Naioth*, *Samuel* is said to be standing amongst them *as appointed over them*; who being amply indued with the Gift of the Spirit, it is not impossible but that the Hymns or Songs which his Disciples sung were such as he himself had composed by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But this I offer only as a Conjecture: However, I think we may fairly infer from what is here said of *Samuel*, that the Singing such Hymns to the Glory of God was an Exercise or Duty, which the Masters taught, and the Scholars learned, in the Prophetick Schools.

The first, and be sure, the principal Design of these Instructions was, that they, who devoted their whole Study and Time to the

* See Mr. Mede's Works, p. 59.

Honour

Honour of God, might always be provided with suitable Forms of Adoration and Praise, for his Worship and Service. Not but that this Practice (like other Duties of Religion) had a natural Tendency to facilitate and promote a Progress in their Studies. For by such a constant and daily Use of *Psalmody*, they kept themselves continually in such due Temper of Mind, as might the better fit them for the Divine Breathings of the Prophetick Spirit; which being of a mild, and free, and gentle, Nature, would not consort with Sadness, or melancholy and turbulent Passions, but always chose an easy, calm, and chearful, Disposition *. Of this we have a remarkable Instance in *Elisha*, 2 Kings ii. 9—15. who, though he possessed a double Portion of this Spirit, yet could not exert it whilst his Passions were disordered, but was forced to wait till he was calm and easy: For so we read, that upon some Indignation that he had conceived against the King of *Israel*, he could not prophesy unto the King of *Judah*,

* See *Smith on Prophecy*, in his *Select Discourses*, p. 245—250. The Chevalier *Ramsay* also observes from *Strabo lib. 17*, That the Schools of the *Magi* amongst the *Persians* looked upon *Musick* as something heavenly, and proper to calm the Passions, and to put the Soul into a Serenity fit for Meditation: For which Reason they always began and concluded the Day by Concerts. *Travels of Cyrus*. Vol. I. p. 78, 79. Edit. 4. 1730.

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till he was soothed again and quieted by the Help of a Minstrel. *As the LORD of Hosts liveth* (saith he) *before whom I stand; surely were it not that I regard the Presence of Jehoshaphat the King of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee: But now bring me a Minstrel: And it came to pass, when the Minstrel played, that the Hand of the LORD, i. e. the Spirit of Prophecy, came upon him,* chap. iii. 14, 15.

One End therefore, we may suppose, of their applying themselves so diligently to the Use of *Psalmody* and *Musick*, was to keep themselves serene, and void of such Disturbances, as might be a Let or Hindrance to this peaceable Spirit. Over and above which, it is likewise reasonable to believe, that it also conduced to the communicating of this Influence from the Prophet to the Hearers: viz. by working up the Thoughts and Imaginations of their Disciples to a Sympathy with their own; by which means their Instruction and Principles would be more easily instilled, and the Spirit itself more readily conveyed. The Case of *Saul* is a very remarkable Instance of this: Who coming to the *Hill of God*, and there hearing the Prophets prophesying in the manner described above,

was

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was turned directly into another Man, *his Heart* ^{S E R M.}
being changed, and he prophesying amongst ^{II.}
them, 1 Sam. x. 9, 10. The very same Event

which happened first to his Messengers, and then again to himself, some time afterwards, when he would have fetched *David* by Force from among the Prophets at *Naioth*, ch. xix. 20—24. From this powerful Influence upon such as opposed themselves as *Enemies* to the Holy Spirit of God; we may guess what Energy and Force it must have upon those who were *predisposed* to receive it. And indeed that such a Method must be very instrumental to raise an Agreement and Sympathy of Mind; we may partly judge from those small Resemblances of it which we ourselves have sometimes felt, when from a chearful and free overflowing of Reason in an intelligible, but yet unexpected, way, in a Person who has discoursed to us upon a Subject perhaps unknown to us before; we have perceived, even without these extraordinary Helps, like Thoughts and Sentiments to arise in ourselves.

But I need not inlarge any further upon this: My principal Design in it being only to shew, that even the Methods of Education, that appear to have been used in the Prophe-
tick

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tick Schools, are a sufficient Proof that the *previous Dispositions and Qualifications* for Prophecy were what the Sons of the Prophets were instructed in, and trained up to, by Discipline and Use.

It will be necessary however to proceed a little further to shew that the other Parts of the Prophetick Office, as well as this which I have now been mentioning, were what the Disciples or Sons of the Prophets were instructed in and practised. This may partly be inferred from the Duties they were put upon, whilst they were only Probationers under the Tuition of their Governors or Guides: By which it seems they were often employed as their Deputies or Proxies to execute their Orders, and to do some lesser Offices in their stead: which, be sure, was done, not so much to spare the Labour of the Prophet, as to teach their Scholars the Business, to which they themselves might hope to be one Day or other called. Thus, for instance, we find one of the *Children of the Prophets* employed by *Elisha* to anoint *Jehu* the Son of *Jehoshaphat* to be King over *Israel*, 2 Kings ix. Though the principal Business to which these Students applied themselves was undoubtedly the Study of the Law of God, in
order

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order to teach and explain it to the People. For that this was an Office which the Prophets performed we may learn from the Question which the good *Shunammite* was asked by her Husband, when she was going to *Elisha* to implore his Assistance for the raising of her Child: *Wherefore* (saith he) *wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither New-Moon nor Sabbath*, 2 Kings iv. 25. which evidently alludes to a Resort of the People to the Prophet at those solemn Times, for the instructing and directing them in the Will of God. And it is supposed to have been in right of this Part of his Function, that the *Man from Baarshalisba*, ver. 42. mentioned a little lower, brought to him the Offering of the *First Fruits of his Corn*, Numb. xviii. 12. For the *First Fruits*, by the Law, were to be given to the *Priests*. But the *Priests* having been driven away from the Ten Tribes ever since *Jeroboam's* setting up his Calves at *Bethel* and *Dan*, 2 Chron. xi. 14. it is not improbable but that the Maintenance that was used to be given to them, might be now brought to the Prophets, who took the Care of instructing the People in their stead.

And indeed *Preaching* and declaring the Duties of Religion is so very proper to the Business

SERMON. Business of a Prophet, that St. Paul generally
 II. ly chuses to express it by *Prophefying*, Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xiv. 31, 32. And amongst the different Officers that God had appointed in the Church, he distinguishes those who were peculiarly endued with this Gift, by the Name of *Prophets*, 1 Theff. v. 20. It is generally believed indeed, and upon good Foundation, that the *Prophefying* St. Paul speaks of, *Ephes. iv. 11.* was a Faculty of teaching the Mysteries of Religion by the Help of a Divine Illumination from above: And it is certain, that the Notion of prophesying implies in it not only the Office of expounding and interpreting the written Word; but also of revealing Things not before known, and of foretelling Things future by Revelation from God. But even in this highest Sense, it will appear, to imply no more than what the Disciples at the Prophetick Schools, were often endued with. The *Sons of the Prophets* both at *Bethel* and *Jericho* were beforehand apprized of the Design of the LORD to remove *Elijah* from the Head of *Elisba*, 2 Kings ii. 3, 5. And it was also a certain Man of the *Sons of the Prophets* that denounced to *Abab*, 1 Kings xx. 35, &c. under the Parable of a Prisoner, the Judgments of
 God

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GOD for his untimely Pity in his releasing ^{S E R M.}
Benbadad, whom the LORD had appointed ^{II.}
to utter Destruction. And indeed when any
Blessings were to be promised, or any Judg-
ments to be denounced, or some extraordi-
nary Event to be told to the People; the
Messenger was usually chosen from these
Schools, where, by their preparatory Exer-
cise and Discipline, they were rendered more
susceptible of the Divine Impulse, by know-
ing as it were how to yield to and cherish it,
and how to behave themselves under the Re-
velation. But this leads me directly to

II. The SECOND Observation which I
made upon the Text, *viz.* That it contains
a tacit Concession that God usually chose his
Prophets from hence, and that none were or-
dinarily called to the Prophetick Office unless
they had been trained up to it by such Edu-
cation. And this I take the same Words to
imply which I laid down as the Foundation
of the foregoing Head: *I was no Prophet,*
(saith *Amos*) *neither was I a Prophet's Son:*
Which he mentions to shew, that it was
something extraordinary that he should be
endued with the Spirit of Prophecy; which
was not usually given to any but those who
2 had

SERM. had been trained up in the Use of such preparatory Exercise, as might qualify them for it.

That this was really the Case, I think may be inferred from the Instance of *Elisha*, whose *Presiding* over the Prophets, (after the Assumption of *Elijah*) as their *Instructor* or *Guide*, has already been observed from his Care in providing for them, from their sitting before him in the Posture of Disciples, and from their addressing him for Leave to enlarge their Building. And that he himself had been trained up in the same Manner before, appears from what is said of him, when *Elijah* cast his *Mantle* upon him, viz. that he *arose, and went after Elijah, and ministred unto him*, 1 Kings xix. 19, 21. In what Quality or Respect he ministred, may be gathered from *Elijah's* being afterwards called his *Master* and *Father*; c. ii. 3, 5, 12. which shews, that *Elisha* was his *Disciple* or *Son*. So that *His* Case alone is an Instance sufficient, that when a new Prophet was wanting to succeed a former in an *extraordinary Measure* of the Prophetick Spirit; a *Prophet's Disciple* was accepted by God as the fittest Person to confer it upon. For *Elisha*, we know, had, according to his Request, a *double Portion*, ver. 9—15. of the

Spirit of his Master, which must signify at S E R M. II. least that he had the Share of a First Born, or doubly the Portion of a Prophet's Son; and is interpreted by some (though not I think upon very probable Grounds) of twice as much as had been given to *Elijah* *.

An equal Degree, be sure, he had. For his *Miracles* were not fewer nor less notable, nor his *Predictions* less verified. When *Elias* was covered with a Whirlwind, *Eliseus* was filled with his Spirit: Whilst he lived, he was not moved with the Presence of any Prince; neither could any bring him into Subjection. No Word could overcome him; and after his Death his Body prophesied. He did Wonders in his Life, and at his Death were his Works marvellous, Ecclus. xlviii. 12—14.

If any one should here object, that *Elisba* was designed and nominated by God to be Successor to *Elijah*, and to be Prophet in his Room, 1 Kings xix. 16—21. before ever he was called to minister to him; it is what I know, and what I would urge as a farther Confirmation of the Observation I have made. Because from hence it appears, that though God himself had singled out *Elisba*, with in-

* See Pole's Synopsis and Estius on the Place.

S E R M. ^{II.} tent to confer so large a Share of his Spirit upon him; yet he previously commands *Elijah* to anoint him, to apprize him of the Design which God had towards him. Accordingly, *Elisha* immediately follows him, attends him as a Disciple for ten Years afterwards, being instructed, no doubt, during all that Time in every Thing necessary to fit him for that high Office he himself was to execute, as soon as his Master should be taken from his Head. And from this Attendance on *Elijah* it was, that a *Servant of Jehoram, King of Israel*, inferred, that *Elisha the Son of Shaphat* was a likely Person, by whom to enquire of the LORD, viz. because he had poured Water on the Hands of *Elijah*, 2 Kings iii. 11.

And that even the *Lesser* Degrees of the Prophetick Spirit were seldom bestowed upon any but those that were educated and trained up in such previous Studies as might dispose them for them; may be inferred from the Wonder which the People expressed at the Propheying of *Saul*. For had it been usual for those to be endued with the Spirit, who had not gone through such a preparatory Course; *Saul's* bearing a Part with them in their *Anthems* or *Hymns* only, would not have

have caused so great an Admiration as to have ^{SERM.}
given Rise to a Proverb, as we find it did; ^{II}

it being customary from that Time, when any one was observed to rise of a sudden from an obscure Condition to some eminent Dignity, to say, *Is Saul also amongst the Prophets?* 1 Sam. x. 12.

The Amazement indeed was something allayed by a prudent Question of a Stander-by; who seasonably asked them, who was *their* Father? i. e. who was the *Father* of that Company of Prophets from whom the Spirit of the LORD was derived upon *Saul*? intimating, no doubt, that the same GOD who enabled and assisted *them* with his Spirit, could, if he pleased, inspire *Saul* also of a sudden, without the Help of any other Master, or previous Education. And, be sure, the Power of GOD is not to be disputed. However, it is evident from the Astonishment of the Beholders, that the Case was exceeding novel and rare: And this Instance of it shews that it was more a Token of the Strength and Power of the Spirit in the Prophets, than of any due Tendency or Qualification in *Saul*: For the Spirit of Prophecy did not continue and remain with *Saul*, as it did with the Company of Prophets whom he met; but as soon as

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ever he was separated from them, his own Prophesying ceased : After which we read of it no more, till upon a like Occasion, at *Naioth* in *Ramah*, the Spirit of the LORD came upon him again : But then it was also so unexpected and surprizing, that the Text tells us the old Proverb was renewed upon it, viz. *Is Saul also among the Prophets?* chap. xix. 23, 24. Not that it is to be denied that Men sometimes were endued with the Spirit of Prophecy without their seeking it, and that they were called to the Exercise of the Prophetick Office without any previous Preparations of their own : But then it may be urged, that, whenever this happened, the Prophet was expected to be able to alledge an *immediate Inspiration and Call from God* : Which was

III. The THIRD Observation I made upon the Text, which gives us an Instance of this very Case in the Person of *Amos* : *I was no Prophet, (saith he) neither was I a Prophet's Son ; but I was an Herdman, and a Gatherer of Sycomore Fruit.* This we may presume was an Engagement and Employ that left him but little Opportunity of improving himself by Discipline and Study, and

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less Expectations of being called to an Office, <sup>S E R M.
II.</sup> which the greatest Preparations did usually precede. The Business of an *Herdman* or an *Husbandman* being expressly mentioned in another Place, as inconsistent with that of a Prophet. *He shall say, I am no Prophet, I am an Husbandman, for Man taught me to keep Cattle from my Youth, Zech. xiii. 5.* And yet we find that how unexpected soever it might be to *Amos*, and how surprizing soever it might be to others, he is suddenly removed from his former Occupation, and undertakes to denounce the heavy Judgments of God against *Judah* and *Israel*, against the *Syrians* and *Philistines*, and all the neighbouring Nations round him. But was this any sudden Motion of his own? Was it any extraordinary Holiness or Sanctity, or any superior natural Abilities that put him upon taking this Office upon himself? Far from it: He enters his Protestation against any such Surmise; and solemnly declares, that both the Motion and the Power were entirely from God. The *LORD* took me (saith he) as I followed the Flock, and the *LORD* said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my People *Israel*. And whom the *LORD* vouchsafes so immediately to call, we may be sure he

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will supply, by the extraordinary Influence of his Holy Spirit, whatever was wanting from a previous Education. But without such a Call, and so extraordinary a Supply, the Words of *Amos* seem evidently to suppose, that the Exercise of any Part of the Prophetick Office, by one not educated and trained up to it, was beside his Vocation. But I have been too large upon the First Head of my Discourse (which indeed was the principal one I had in my View) to insist more particularly upon either of the latter. I shall therefore proceed to draw some useful Observations from the Whole, which, with a suitable Application, will take up more Time than I ought to hope for, after having spent so much already.

I. First then, We may learn from what has been said, not only the *Expediency*, but even the *Necessity* of a *proper Method* of Education and Discipline to qualify Persons for the Offices of Religion. We have seen that the Disciples in the Prophetick Schools, though they might hope to be assisted by Divine Inspiration, did not neglect to improve *themselves*, as far as they were able, by Application and Study. And though perhaps
the

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the Methods of Education are not so clearly ^{S E R M.} discerned after the Accounts of those Schools ^{II.} begin to fail; yet we may still observe, that most of the Prophets, of whom we have any Remains in the sacred Text, have discovered themselves to have been Men of a good Education. The *Elegance* of *Isaiah*, the *Rhetorick* of *Jeremiah*, and the Skill of *Ezekiel* in *Architecture* and *Geography*, plainly shew the Education of each of them to have been liberal and ingenuous. And the Wisdom of *Daniel* was so famous even in his Youth, that we find it gave Rise to a *Chaldean* Proverb, *Ezek.* xxviii. 3. Nor is there any Grounds to imagine, that these Endowments were inspired, or that they received them together with the extraordinary Influence and Operations of the Spirit; since it appears, that even those, who were actually endued with the Holy Ghost, still used the same Diligence, or rather more than before, to gain what Knowledge and Assistance they could, by the Use and Help of ordinary Means. The last mentioned Prophet is an Instance of this, who, though favoured with Visions and Revelations from the LORD beyond many of those who had lived before him; yet did not take Occasion from these

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gracious Dispensations to slacken his Study in the Holy Writings; but industriously applied himself to the reading and considering the Mysteries revealed in them. *In the first Year (saith he) of the Reign of Darius, I Daniel understood by Books, the Number of the Years whereof the Word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish seventy Years in the Desolations of Jerusalem, Dan. ix. 2.* And for this Industry and Pains to learn what he could by his own Application, he is declared by *Gabriel* to be greatly beloved, ver. 22, 23. and Chap. x. 11—21. and has the Knowledge of those Things revealed to him by the Angel, which were beyond his own natural Abilities to acquire.

Nor did Studying grow less useful, when, under the Christian Dispensation, Revelations grew clearer: *Timothy* was the darling Disciple of *St. Paul*, a Man extraordinarily endowed with the Gift of the Spirit, and marked out by Prophecy, 1 Tim. i. 18. as one that should prove very useful and eminent in the Work of the Ministry. And yet *this Man* *St. Paul* exhorts to give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, and to Doctrine, chap. iv. 13. Where a late judicious Father of

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our Church * observes the Order of the Words to be very remarkable: He is advised to give Attendance to *Reading* FIRST, and THEN to *Exhortation* and *Doctrine*; i. e. to be himself a well-read Divine, before he undertakes to instruct and teach others. The very Words too of the Apostle, he observes to be emphatical: For he advises *Timothy* not only to *read* and *study*, that he might be able to exhort and teach with Profit; but to give Attendance to Reading, and not to neglect the Gift that was in him; but to meditate on the Things that he had read and learned, and to addict and give himself wholly to them. All which Phrases evidently signified, that the greatest Industry and Diligence were to be used by him in Reading and Study, and the other Exercises that are there mentioned. The same Thing (saith the same Reverend Father) which St. Paul intends when he admonishes him afterwards to stir up the Gift of God which was in him, 2 Tim. i. 6. where the Greek Word ἀναζωοποιεῖν signifies to cherish and rekindle a Fire, by blowing and supplying it with new Fuel, which otherwise would be apt to die, and be extinguished.

* Bishop Bull's Sermon on 2 Tim. iv. 13. p. 114.

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Nay, even St. *Paul* himself, who gave this Advice to his Disciple *Timothy*, and who was taught in the Mysteries of Religion by the Lord *JESUS* himself, and could boast of *Visions* and *Revelations*, 2 Cor. xi, xii. and of *Spiritual Gifts*, 1 Cor. xiv. 18. beyond all the Apostles; even this *great Apostle*, I say, thinks it an Advantage that he had been educated and brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, Acts xxii. 3. The Proficiency he then made in all the Parts of Human Literature under so eminent a Master, he found to the last of great Use and Service to him in his Preaching and Writing both to *Gentiles* and *Jews* *. Nor did his Inspiration afterwards by the Holy Ghost supersede his further Reading and Study: On the contrary, we may infer, that he pursued them both, with the same Industry and Diligence that he had done before. To what End else doth he write to *Timothy* to bring him *his Book-Case, his Books, and his Parchments*? 2 Tim. iv. 13. What indeed I render by *Book-Case*, is in our *English* Translation called a *Cloke*: But the original Word may be interpreted a *Book-Case* or *Scriptore* †; and so it is rendered

* See Bishop *Bull*, ut supra, p. 401.

† Φαιδόνης, as in some Copies, or Φιδόνης, as in others.

Upon

dered in the old Syriack Version *, and so E R M.
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it would agree better with the other Things
St. Paul writes for here, viz. *His Books
and his Parchments*: By the first of which
are understood a few choice Books which
the Apostle had collected; by the other he
is supposed to mean his *Common Place-Book*,
wherein he had noted what he thought
might be of Use to him out of the many
Books he had read; which therefore being
the Fruit of some Years Study, he charges
Timothy especially to bring with him †. So
that let *Φαλόνης* signify what it will, it is plain
from the Text, that our Apostle, though in-
spired, had still Occasion for his *Parchments*
and *Books*, and that he sent for them in or-
der to read and make use of them, since o-
therwise he sent for them to no Purpose.

Upon which Words see *Phavorinus*, *Hesychius*, and *Leigh's Critica Sacra*. See also *Estius* upon the Place. *Phavorinus* also says, that *Φαλόνης* signifies *εὐλητὸν τομάριον μίμραναι*, a folded Vellum or Parchment, which perhaps (saith Dr. *Hammond*) may be all one with the *μίμραναι*, hereafter mention-
ed; because they being mentioned with a *μάστιγα δ*), but espe-
cially, seem to denote somewhat which had been formerly
mentioned, rather than any new Thing.

* So also *Tremellius's* Version (which is a Translation of the
Syriack) reads *Domum Scriptorum*, &c.

† See *Estius* and *Grotius* and *Pool's Synopsis* on the Place;
and *Bull*, ut supra.

2. This

2. This is the first Observation which naturally arises from the Subject of my Discourse: And this as naturally suggests another not less pertinent or proper: And that is in relation to the Folly and Madhess of some Enthusiasts amongst us, who, under the Pretence of a *Light within* (which they blasphemously assert to supply the Want of Human Learning) despise and renounce those ordinary Means for the attaining of Knowledge, which God affords. We have seen, that in the Times of the *extraordinary* Dispensation of it, the Spirit of God was never given but to the Diligent and Industrious, and to such as did their best to attain it. Even those who expected and depended upon the Illumination of the Holy Ghost, did not expect that the Spirit should render their Studies needless; but rather used the greater Diligence in the one, in order to obtain a greater Portion of the other. The Assistance vouchsafed by the Holy Ghost is well expressed by St. *Paul*, where he says, that *the Spirit HELPETH our Infirmities*, Rom. viii. 26. It *helps*, not by doing every Thing for us, but by affording it's Assistance where our own Power fails. The original Word is very expressive and significant: *Συναντιλαμβάνει*:

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Caveat: It helps together with and over-against SERM.
II.
us: As when one Man joins his Shoulders to help another in the lifting of a Burthen. So that even the *Extraordinary* Gifts of the Holy Ghost, whenever they are vouchsafed, are not designed to *supersede* our natural Faculties, but to *assist* them; not to *slacken* our Industry, but to *encourage* it. And therefore "the Divine Assistance and Human Industry must always go together, and an Anathema is due to that Doctrine which separates and divides them *."

Some few Instances indeed may be given of Men that have been inspired immediately and of a sudden, without any Application or Endeavours of their own: As was the Case of *Amos* in the Text, and perhaps of others of the Prophets, and of most of the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord; But then this always happened upon emergent Occasions, and so is not to be expected ordinarily in the Church. However, if our modern Pretenders to Inspiration will shew the same Power and Demonstration of the Spirit as the Prophets and Apostles did; if they will confirm their Mission by Miracles and Signs, or by speaking in Tongues which they never learn-

* Bishop Bull, ut supra.

ed;

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ed; if to these they will join the Apostolical Test, and *confess that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh*, 1 John iv. 2. and preach the same Gospel, and the same Gospel only, that was delivered by him and his Apostles after him, Gal. i. 8, 9. we shall be ready to acknowledge their Spiritual Gifts, however meanly they may be furnished with the Endowments of Nature. Nay, we will join Issue with them upon lower Terms than these; let them omit the extraordinary Tests of their Mission, and only speak consistently with Decency and Sense, and they will not find us averse to examine their Plea: But the Spirit, we are sure, can never be the Author of Blasphemy and Nonsense, which yet most of them vent under Cover of his Name; no more than he can be guilty of Falshood and Fraud, which the remaining few would impute to him, who pretend to speak those things by Inspiration, which it is plain they have gained by Labour and Study, which they would seem to decry. But

3. Besides these Enthusiasts who depreciate Human Learning under pretence of being assisted by a Divine Illumination, there are not wanting on the other Side those who declaim against the Necessity of either, under a Notion

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tion that the Rule of our Faith is so intelligible and easy, that there is nothing wanting but a good natural *Understanding*, *Integrity* and *Zeal* to qualify a Preacher to teach and explain it. This is a Plea, against which the whole Tenour of my Discourse lies stronger, (if possible) than it does against the former. For we have seen that those who expected to have their Understandings enlightened by the Holy Ghost, had still Occasion for all the Learning and Knowledge they could attain to by ordinary Means, to fit them for their Office. And therefore much more surely must they stand in need of all the Helps that Human Knowledge and Industry can supply, who undertake the Performance of the same Holy Office, meerly upon the Strength of their own natural Abilities. Accordingly, if we look back into the Practice of the *Jews*, whose Methods of educating to the Offices of Religion have already been so serviceable upon the former Point, we shall find they will equally bear us out in the condemning the Presumption of those forward Pretenders, of whom we are now speaking. No illiterate Mechanick was suffered amongst them to jump immediately from a *Shop-board* or *Stall* into a *Pulpit* or *Desk*, as Impudence or Folly would

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would push him on; nor indeed were *any* Persons allowed to take upon themselves the Office of preaching, or reading publick Lectures in Divinity, till after they had been regularly prepared for it and ordained *. To this end the Cities that were given by Lot to the *Levites*, Josh. xxi. were as so many Universities for the training up Students to the Knowledge of the Law, from whence they were afterwards dispersed, as there was Occasion, into the several Synagogues to instruct the People †. So that the *Keeping of Knowledge*, (as the Prophet expresses it) was always committed to the *Priest's Lips*, Mal. ii. 7. and they who would *seek the Law*, were to *seek it at his Mouth*: For *he was the Messenger of the LORD of Hosts*; i. e. the Person who was the fittest, both as to his Qualifications and Authority, to declare and explain the Will of God.

Nor are such previous Preparations less necessary now under the *Christian Dispensation*, than they were formerly under the *Jewish*. It is true, the *New Testament* is in most Parts more *easy* to be understood than the *Old*: But still we are assured by one that writ part

* Lightfoot, Vol. I. p. 612. Vol. II. p. 86.
foot *ut supra*.

† Light-

of it, that there are some Things even in the S E R M. II.
New so hard to be understood, that they who
are unlearned and unstable may wrest them to
their own Destruction, 2 Pet. iii. 16. And St.
Paul we find gives Instructions to Timothy,
2 Tim. iii. 15. (notwithstanding he had been
versed in the Holy Scriptures from a Child,
and was then esteemed learned enough to be
Bishop of a Church) that he would still give
Attendance to Reading and Meditation, 1 Tim.
iv. 13, 14. that he might be the better qua-
lified for Exhortation and Doctrine. And
surely if Timothy, a Contemporary of the
Apostles, and a favourite Disciple of one of
the greatest amongst them, of one who not
only writ great Part of the New Testament,
but indeed some of the most difficult Parts of
the whole; if such a one, I say, had still oc-
casion to read and meditate to fit him for the
Work of Exhortation and Doctrine; can we
imagine, that a Person at above sixteen hun-
dred Years Distance from the Time that the
latest of the Scriptures were composed, should
be able to perform this Work (as he ought
to do) without any Reading or Meditation at
all?

But I need not, I believe, enlarge any fur-
 ther to expose the Absurdity either of this,
 or

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or of the former, Pretence: What has already been said is sufficient, I hope, to shew, that although they differ in Principle, yet in the Result they both agree; and that, though they may seem, like *Samson's* Foxes, to pull contrary ways, yet they are both detached from the same Quarter, and both combine to do Mischief where they go. For whether Learning be decried as *insufficient* on the one hand, or as *superfluous* on the other; it is plain, that both Sides contribute to obstruct its Advancement; and so Ignorance or Barbarism is made way for by either. And what Cause this is designed to promote, we may easily conjecture. *Ignorance* is the fruitful Mother of Superstition: For they who know nothing, are in a ready Disposition to believe any thing. In the dark Ages of Christianity, the Dregs of *Popery* were not too gross to be eagerly imbibed: Nor could Men see their Errors, till Learning revived again, in some Parts of the Church, about the Time of the Reformation. But as that let in Light, Truth gradually appeared. Nor is it in the Power of our Adversaries to impose upon us again, so long as we have Sense enough to discover the Cheat. And therefore no wonder if among so many Emissaries that are daily sent

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sent out in different Disguises to confound and delude us; some should be employed in depreciating Learning, which they know to be the greatest Bar in their Way.

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But it is more than Time that I should hasten to conclude: And yet it would be inexcusable should I wholly make an End of a Discourse on this Subject, upon this Occasion, and before this Audience, without observing the near Resemblance we have the Happiness to bear, in the *Methods* of our Education, to those ancient Seminaries of which we have been speaking. A Resemblance, I hope, that will always be a Motive to imitate them as closely in *Application* and *Diligence*. And then what should hinder but that the one should be as illustrious and useful as the other? We want nothing necessary, or even convenient, to make us so, which they enjoyed: Our Discipline is as regular, and our Helps for Studying are as great: Our manner of living is as well contrived to ease us from Care, and our Dwellings as well situated for Contemplation and Thought. In short we are no ways inferior in *outward* Advantages, if so be we are not deficient as to those *from within*. And we shall not, I hope, be wanting

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II.

ing to ourselves for what it is purely in our own Power to supply. Inward Piety and Goodness, and the keeping the Mind continually in a serious, devout and heavenly Frame (which I have shewed to be Qualifications that are essential to a studious and contemplative Life) can only be the Effect of our own Watchfulness and Care. Not but that we have all the Help and Assistance, even in this Respect, that Opportunities can afford us, by the religious Provision that our Founders have made for the continual Return of *Hours of Prayer*. They knew how necessary an habitual Devotion was to keep Religion alive in the Heart: And they knew how incapable a Heart would be, without Religion, of receiving any Divine Impressions from above: And for this Reason, it was always their principal Concern, that, together with the Means of being *learned*, we should be provided with the Means of being *good*. Since therefore we have such happy Opportunities for each, let us not, I beseech you, render both ineffectual, by aiming at the one without the other. For an Observation of a wise Man that was made long since, will be always true; that *into a wicked Soul Wisdom will not enter, nor dwell in a Body that is subject unto Sin,*

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Sin, Wisd. i. 4. Not that we are *now*, by ^{S E R M.}
any Means, to expect the same extraordinary ^{II}
Measures of Inspiration which were formerly
vouchsafed to the Prophetick Schools; since
we have not now the same Occasion for
them. Providence *now* does not call upon
Men by any *new* Revelations, but leaves them
to be instructed and guided by the *Old*. All
therefore that is *now* necessary to fit out and
qualify the Man of God, and to *perfect the*
Saints for the Work of the Ministry, is to be
able to understand those Revelations that have
already been given, and to apply them dis-
creetly as new Occasions shall arise. So that
the Reason why our Schools are not favoured
now with the same *extraordinary* Gifts and
Graces, with which the Prophetick Schools
were endowed; is not because our Studies are
of less Consequence, or our Calling less impor-
tant; but because our *ordinary* Helps and
Assistances are superior to those which they
enjoyed; and because, in a word, we have
now the Benefit of their Revelations. Not
but that God, if we stand in need of his Di-
vine Illumination, and are duly qualified with
those previous Dispositions which he demands,
will still so far assist our Endeavours, as to
render those Things easy and intelligible,

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which, were we left to our own natural Understandings alone, would be difficult and obscure. A Reflection that should teach us, whenever we gain any new Degree of Light, not to ascribe it to our own Ability and Parts, but to him who is the Author and *Father of Light that cometh down from above*, James i. 17. For even all our Endowments, whether natural or acquired, must be referred to him; since *all these*, as well as those that are supernatural, *worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, which divideth to every Man severally as he will*, 1 Cor. xii. 11. Even Nature itself must in the last Resolution be imputed to Grace: For *who* (saith the Apostle) *maketh thee to differ from another? Or what hast thou, that thou didst not receive?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. Whatever useful Gifts therefore any of us enjoy, let us praise the Author and Dispenser of them all. And what still is wanting let us pray for to him, who promises to *answer us when we call, and to shew us the great and mighty things which as yet we know not*, Jer. xxxiii. 3. This was his Declaration to his Prophets of the Old Testament, and the same is confirmed by his Apostles in the New: *If any of you lack Wisdom* (saith St. James) *let him ask of God, that giveth to all Men liberally,*

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rally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given SERM.
II.
him, James i. 5. And thus blessed with the
Divine Assistance upon our own Industry and
Pains, we shall make due use of the pious Be-
nefactions we here enjoy ; we shall give a
grateful Return to the Expence of our Friends,
and answer the just Expectations of our
Country : Which will then see the Value of
a regular Preaching built upon the Founda-
tion of solid Learning ; and know how to
distinguish it from the Rants of a wild En-
thusiasm on the one hand, and from the Pre-
sumption of a stupid Ignorance on the other.
In a word, even our Enemies will become
our Friends, and we shall be esteemed the
Joy of the whole Earth. The Delightsome-
ness of our Dwellings shall not be envied, nor
the Liberality of our Founders be thought
too profuse : But though *their Bodies* have
long since been *buried in Peace*, *their Names*
shall live for evermore : *The People shall tell*
of their Wisdom, and the Congregation shall
shew forth their Praise, Ecclus. xliv. 14, 15.

SERMON III.

The Credibility of Myſteries.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

*Without Controverſy, great is the Myſtery of
Godlineſs : GOD was manifeſt in the
Fleſh, —*

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ST. Paul, at the writing of this Epistle to Timothy, was in hopes of an Opportunity of paying him a Viſit in Perſon ſpeedily, in order to give him ſome Inſtructions and Advice with Relation to his Government of the Church at *Ephesus*, over which he himſelf had appointed him Biſhop not long before. But not knowing whether the Holy Spirit (by whom he was abſolutely guided in all his Travels) might not order him ſome other Courſe ; he thinks proper, whiſt he is writing to him, to inſert ſome Directions concerning the Perſons whom he would have him make choice of for the Work of the Miniſtry. Theſe he would have, to

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a good degree, exemplary and knowing. For S E R M.
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since the Christian Religion is a *Mystery*, and a *Mystery of Godliness*; since it contains nothing but what is holy and pure, and yet what it contains is of a Nature immensely deep and profound; it is not fit the preaching of it should be intrusted either with unholy or unskilful Hands. St. *Paul* therefore directs that those, who are appointed to this Employment, should be *blameless* as to their Lives, and *not Novices* as to their Faith; that they *have a good Report of them which are without* the Church, and be *apt in teaching* them that are within; that they be such, in a Word, as are able to *hold the Mystery of Faith*, and to hold it also *in a good Conscience*; since they that lose the one are apt also to *make Shipwreck of the other*. And *these things* (saith the Apostle) *write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly*, to instruct thee more fully; *But if I tarry long, or come not at all, that thou mayst know*, from these Hints, *how thou oughtest to behave thy self* (and particularly with regard to the choice of Ministers) *in the House of GOD, which is the Church*, not of Idols, but of the Living God, and which is also *the Pillar and Ground of the Truth*; as it is only the Church which,

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under the Guidance and Influence of the Holy Ghost, can maintain and support it *. As the *Truth* therefore will be propagated either pure or corrupt, according as the Persons, whom thou deputeest to this Office, shall be qualified and disposed; thou seest what reason I have to press thee to be cautious in the choice of them; especially since *without Controversy*, since it is on all hands allowed, that *this Truth*, this *Mystery of Godliness* is *very great*; the Articles of our Religion being of

* Some conceiving that the same thing cannot properly be called both a *House* and a *Pillar* too, and observing that the Apostles, and other eminent Members of the Church are called *Στόλοι*, or *Pillars* in the New Testament^a; and that *Martyrs* are also so called by *Eusebius*^b, and that one of them particularly is by the same Historian called *στόλος καὶ ἰδεαίωμα*^c, (the very Expression which St. Paul here uses;) they therefore conclude that the Apostle means *Timothy* by the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, in this Place: So that they would have the 15th verse, by the help of a Parenthesis, run thus — *But if I tarry long, that thou mayst know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God (which is the Church of the Living God) thou that art the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.* I shall leave the Reader to take which Interpretation pleases him best; and only observe that if the Words are to be understood of *Timothy*, the Connection must hold thus, — *Thou that art the Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, on whom therefore it lyes to make choice of Persons fit and able to preach and propagate it; especially since *without Controversy*, &c.

^a Gal. ii. 9. Rev. iii. 12. ^b Hist. Eccles. l. 6. c. 41. p. 306. Edit. Reading. ^c Ibid. l. 5. c. 1. p. 201.

so high a Nature, that the strongest human Capacity or Reason can never wholly comprehend them all : As let me but enumerate a few of the Particulars, and thou wilt soon be convinced. They teach us that the eternal Son of God, God equal with the Father, *was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into Glory.*

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This I apprehend to be the Meaning of the Words, and that the Sense of them is to be thus connected with the foregoing. And if so, one would think three Inferences might be drawn from the whole, not easily to be opposed : *viz.*

First, That the Person that was incarnate for our Salvation, was truly, properly, and essentially, *Divine*. For it was God (saith my Text) that was *manifest in the Flesh*.

Secondly, That the *Manner* of this Incarnation, together with its Consequences, is wholly inexplicable, *mysterious*, and incomprehensible. For *without Controversy great* (saith the Apostle) *is the Mystery of Godliness*. Notwithstanding which it follows,

Thirdly, From the Occasion of the Words, that the Doctrine it self is necessary to be

preached to, and to be believed by, the People. *These things write I unto thee — that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thy self in the House of God.*

But now, how naturally soever each of these Heads may follow from the Text as I have opened it; it is yet well known that we have Men amongst us, that are ready to controvert every one of them. And indeed it is hard to find a Text entirely free from all Opposition: though none, I think, has harder Fate than this which I have chosen for the Subject of my Discourse. It consists but of two short Propositions in the whole; and Endeavours are used to wrest both of them from us. In the one they reject, GOD, entirely from the Text, by which they would deprive us of the first Inference we would draw from it; in the other they give a Turn to the Sense of the Word, MYSTERY, which would as effectually overthrow the Foundation of the other two. But the present Reading is sufficiently confirmed, not only by the Unintelligibleness of the Words without it *, but also by the universal Consent of all Copies of this Epistle, in the Original Lan-

* See *Milbourn's Mysteries in Religion vindicated.* p. 66.

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guage *. The Word, GOD, therefore must inevitably make a Part of the Text; and being a Part of it, must necessarily be understood of the second Person in the Blessed Trinity; each of the Propositions, that immediately follow, being true of the Son, but not of the Father or the Holy Ghost †. Notwithstanding the Glosses therefore which the *Socinians* and *Arians* have fixed on this Text, it is sufficiently evident from this Text alone, that the SON is the Person who was *manifest in the Flesh*, and that the Person who was so manifest is very GOD. But these being Points which refer to a Doctrine that has been defended of late by so many Hands, and in such different Methods, as to give every one that desires it, an Opportunity of being duly and sufficiently confirmed in it; I shall not attempt to prove either of the Particulars directly and in form; but only to take Occasion from the Words I have read to you, to remove the Objection which some People are apt to make to these Doctrines, from their being *mysterious* and *incomprehensible*. So that,

* See Dr. Mill upon the Place: *Pearson on the Creed*. p. 128. and *Milbourn*, p. 4 ——— 12.

† *Pearson* p. 127, 128. *Milbourn*, p. 68. ——— 72.

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in short, the *Second* and *Third* Head that follow from my Text are what I have in View: And in speaking to these, I shall not confine myself to the single Doctrine of our LORD's Incarnation, but shall consider the Subject of *Mysteries* at large, and shall shew,

FIRST, What it is we mean by *Mysteries*: And,

SECONDLY, That it is no Objection to the believing of any Article of our Religion, that it has what we understand by *Mysteries* in it.

FIRST then, I must shew what it is we mean by *Mysteries*. For that there are *Mysteries* in Religion all that believe the Scriptures must allow, because the Scriptures frequently tell us so. So that in Truth, it is not the *Word* that some Men object to us, but the *Sense* we put upon it: It is necessary therefore that we *explain* the Word, before we proceed to *dispute* about it. Now the Account which the *Socinians* give us of *Mysteries* is, " That they are not therefore called *Mysteries*, because they transcend our Understanding after they are revealed, but because they could not have been known

" with-

"without Divine Revelation *." And this, ^{SERM.}
^{III.}
 for ought I know, may be true sometimes.

In some Places of the New Testament Things may be called *Mysteries*, partly, if not wholly, because they were not known till the Gospel revealed them. But still that the Word signifies more sometimes, I think the bare naming of some Texts will shew. As, for Instance, when St. Paul speaks of the Rejecting of the *Jews*, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*, under the Notion of a *Mystery* that was then revealed, though the Reason of either was not yet to be accounted for: For, *Oh the Depth* (saith he) *both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding † out!* Thus again when he speaks of the close Union and Conjunction between Christ and his Church, though it was already effected and already known, he yet calls it a *Mystery*: *This is a great Mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the*

* *Mysteria divina non idcirco Mysteria dicuntur, quod etiam revelata omnem nostrum Intellectum Captumque transcendunt; sed quod non nisi Revelatione cognosci possint. Slicht. in Misser. de Trin. &c. p. 70.*

Mysterium]. Rem arcanam quam nemo novit nisi a Deo revelatam. Id. in 1 Cor. xv. 51.

† Compare verse 25. and 33. of Rom. xii.

Church,

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Church, Eph. v. 32. And thus lastly, in my Text, the Manifestation of the Son of God in the Flesh, and the Consequences thereof, are said still to be a Mystery, notwithstanding they were now sufficiently revealed. For in both these Places the Verb is used in the present Tense : Τὸ μυστήριον τῆς το μέγα ἔστιν; and again, μέγα ἔστι τὸ τῆς Εὐσεβείας μυστήριον. *This IS a great Mystery, and great IS the Mystery of Godliness.* From whence I would infer that the Word, *Mysteries*, does not only mean Things that could not have been known but by Divine Revelation; but sometimes also is put for Things that transcend our Understanding, even after they are revealed. And if so, then these Texts are sufficient to convince us that it is no Objection to the Truth of any Doctrine, that such Doctrine is even in our Sense of it a Mystery. But that our Adversaries may not charge us with resting a Point of this Importance upon the Meaning of a single precarious Word; I shall chuse to enter upon the Thing itself, and shew what we mean by the Word at present.

Now I would define a Divine Mystery (for of such I am to speak) to be some Truth not discoverable by Reason, but made known to

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us by Revelation, and of which, when revealed, we know only the Reality and not the Manner. It is some Doctrine or Article of Faith, which, upon the Testimony of God, we assent to or believe in the general or at large, though we cannot comprehend all the Particulars. As far indeed as we believe or assent to it, we conceive and understand it; (for there is no Believing, or giving our Assent to, what we do not understand;) but then we perceive that there is something more, which, either for want of Divine Revelation, or else through the Narrowness of our present Capacities, we know nothing of, and which therefore to speak properly, we neither believe nor disbelieve. Thus the Doctrine of the *Trinity* is what we call a *Mystery*; because, though we believe, upon the Testimony of Revelation, that there is a *Trinity of Persons* in the *Unity of the Godhead*; yet we do not pretend to comprehend or conceive in what the Distinction of Persons consists, or in what Manner they are so united as all to make but one Being. But now, even in this *Mystery*, we do not profess to believe any farther than we understand. We understand that there is a God, and that God is one: And we farther understand,

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derstand, from the Holy Scriptures, that, in this Godhead, there are *three Subsistences*, which have each of them *Personal* Characters ascribed to them : And all this, because we understand it, and because the Scriptures have clearly revealed it, we assent to, or believe. But as to the *Modus* or *Manner*, either of their Union, or Distinction ; since neither Reason nor Scripture discovers any thing to us, we therefore do not profess to believe any thing about it. And this is all that we mean by a *Mystery* : Which therefore, even in our Sense of the Word, does not signify a Doctrine, in which we believe what we do not understand, (as our Adversaries would represent ;) but it signifies a Doctrine or an Article of Religion, which implies some Particulars which we do not comprehend, though all that we assent to, or believe, in it, we do. It is a Doctrine about which some Questions may be asked, which we cannot resolve : But then those Questions we do not make any Part of our *Faith*, which is only concerned about the Questions which we are able to prove and explain. Nothing farther therefore, I presume, is necessary to compleat the Subject of this Discourse, than to shew that it is ~~no~~ Objection to the believing of any Article

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title of Religion that it implies something in ^{SERMON.}
it which we cannot comprehend: For this ^{III.}
will make good what I proposed for my

II. SECOND General Head, *viz.* to prove that it is no *Objection* to the believing such an Article that it has what we understand by Mysteries in it. And to do this in as clear and as familiar a Manner as I am able, I shall shew,

First, That Men always did, and always must, and will, believe many Things, which imply some Particulars *beyond their Comprehensions*, or *above their Reason*.

Secondly, I shall shew that nothing that we profess to believe in any Article of our Religion is *contrary to Reason*. From whence,

Thirdly, It will follow that it is no Objection to the Belief of any Article, that it implies something that is *incomprehensible*, or *above our Reason*. And,

First, I am to shew that Men always did, and always must, and will, believe many Things which imply some Particulars *beyond their Comprehension*, or *above their Reason*: i. e. There are many Things which Men do, and must, and will, believe, as to the Reality of their Existence; which yet, as to their

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Cause,

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Cause, or Manner, or Mode of Existing,
 they own they can neither declare nor conceive. An Observation so trite that the commonest Effects of Nature confirm it. For how many Things are there in the World, the Truth of which we are convinced of, beyond the Power of Contradiction; and yet why they should happen in this or that Manner, the profoundest Philosopher no more can tell us than a meer Ideot or Fool? "We know not the Nature of any one Thing under the Sun, but by guessing at it from the Effects which we see it produces. Our Knowledge is nothing but Observation. We see Trees grow and produce their Like: We find such and such Virtues in Herbs and Minerals: But we know not the Reason of any of these Things; no, not of a single Pile of Grass, as why it is of the Colour, Shape or Virtue we see it is *." In a Word, were we to believe nothing that *exceeds our Reason*, we must not believe that we *have* any Reason: For we must deny even that we think, because we know not how we do so, or by what secret Springs our Thoughts are excited and put in-

* *Leslie* against the *Socinians*, Dial. 1. p. 4. 4to.

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to Motion. And if there be so many incon-
ceiveable Things in the Works of Nature,
and in the Operations of our own Minds;
how much more must we expect to meet
with them, in Things that belong to another
World? Should we suffer, for Instance, our
Thoughts to soar to the Divine Being him-
self; how many Truths will our Reason sug-
gest to us, which yet at last it cannot fully
comprehend? We are forced (for Example)
by an undeniable Chain of Arguments to ac-
knowledge a first Cause that existed from E-
ternity, and from which all other Things
have received their Being. And yet who is
able to comprehend how a Being should be
self-existent; how there should be any thing
which never had a Beginning, that was ne-
ver produced, nor owed it's Being to any o-
ther? Again, Who is not lost when he
thinks of Eternity, either past, or to come?
And yet who will deny either one or the o-
ther *? Who can name the Time before
which there was no Time or Duration; or
tell us when Time or Duration shall be no

* The Learned Dr. *Clark* sets this Argument in an admi-
rable Light: " That something (saith he) has really existed,
&c. p. 10. *ad* — are not easy to be answered, p. 11.
Sermons at *Boyle's* Lecture, 3d Edition, p. 10, 11.

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more? Who, lastly, can comprehend, what yet every one that thinks must know to be true, *viz.* that God had existed as long ten millions of Ages ago, as he has done now, or will have done ten millions of Ages hence? or that the World, which (according to the most likely Computation) is not yet six thousand Years old, was created as soon with relation to God, as if it had been created ten thousand times ten thousand Years before? So that we see, which ever Way we turn us, how many Things we meet with confessedly true, and acknowledged by those who deny the mysterious Articles of our Faith, which yet even the wisest and proudest of them all will not presume wholly to comprehend. Why then should they object to any Articles of our Religion, only because they are not fully comprehensible? We are ready to own that Reason unassisted might not so clearly discover these Articles, as it does that there is a Being necessarily existing, and Time or Duration without Beginning or End: But then it is unfair of them to object that Reason is against those Articles, unless they could shew that what we say of them is impossible in itself, or implies a Contradiction. ⁴To remove which Charge is the proper Business of

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of my next Particular, under which I am to shew, SERM.
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Secondly, That nothing that we profess to believe in any Article of our Religion is *contrary to Reason*. Now the two Articles of our Faith, that are charged with containing in them the most Absurdities of any, are those which relate to the *Unity of the Godhead in a Trinity of Persons*, and to the *Co-eternity of the Son with the Father, and of the Holy Ghost with the Father and Son*. These therefore I shall chuse particularly to vindicate, in hopes that if these may be cleared of the Objections, and the Charge proved unjust; the other Articles of our Faith (though they are not without their Mysteries) will more easily be received.

Now as to the first of these Points, which is that of the *Trinity*, the Doctrine of our Church is, in the first of her Articles, declared to be this, *viz. That in the Unity of the Godhead, there be three Persons of one Substance, Power, and Eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*. Inasmuch that (as we express it in the *Athanasian Creed*) *the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God: And yet they are not three Gods, but one God*. This, say our Ad-

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versaries, is direct Contradiction : that one should be three, and three should be but one, And so indeed it would evidently be, should we assert them to be so in the same Respect, But what we really and truly assert, is only this, *viz.* That they are three in Persons, though only one in Essence. We do not say that they are three Persons, and but one Person ; or that they are three Gods, and but one God : This indeed would be a Contradiction : But all that we affirm is, that they are *three Persons in one Nature*, which surely implies no Contradiction at all. We assert, it is true, the Father to be God, the Son to be God, and the Holy Ghost to be God : But then we do not assert either of them to be *a* God, exclusive of the other ; but that each of them is Divine, though they are all jointly but one God. For the same Creed itself reminds us that *like as we are compelled by the Christian Verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord ; so are we forbidden by the Catholick Religion to say, There be three Gods or three Lords.* And therefore when we assert them to be one and three, we always conceive them under different Respects.

And

And indeed what chiefly leads us into a Mistake in relation to this Doctrine is the Word, *Person*, which we are forced to make use of in order to state it. For because *three Persons* are *three distinct Beings* among Men; (as they really are, the Persons of Men being *separate* Persons;) therefore we are apt to have the same Notion, when we speak of the *Trinity* of *Persons* in the *Godhead*. Whereas in the *Godhead* there is but *one Being* or *Substance*, and consequently when we speak of *three Persons*, we mean three *united* Persons, *inseparably* united in that one Substance. We call them *Persons* indeed because each of them speaks of himself, and is spoken of, as a Person: *I, Thou* or *He*, (which we know are Personal Terms, or Characters,) are applied to distinguish them from one another in Holy Scripture *. And these Persons we affirm to be *three*, because so many, the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*, the Scriptures reveal to us, and no more. These three Persons we affirm to be *Divine*, because *such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost*; the Divine Nature, Attributes, Powers and Properties being equally in each of them. *Originally*, indeed, the

* See Dr. *Waterland's* Second Defence, p. 366, &c.

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Godhead is in the Father; From whom as the Fountain it is derived to the Son and the Holy Ghost; And in this Sense, probably, it is, that our Saviour says, *My Father is greater than I*, John xiv. 28. But then again as the *whole Godhead* is communicated, and so is not more in one than in the others, but the same in all; therefore we scruple not also to say, that *in this Trinity none is greater or less than another*. But to proceed; these three Divine Persons, we again assert to be *distinct*, because the Father is not the Son, nor both, nor either of them, the Holy Ghost; As Persons, each of them is mentioned in Scripture exclusively of the others, and have each of them distinct Properties and Operations ascribed to them; as the one to send, the other to be sent, the one to beget, the other to be begotten; the one to take Flesh and not the other, the one to proceed and not the other. And yet, lastly, these three divine distinct Persons, we affirm to be three *united* Persons, and consequently that they are all but *one Substance* or *Being*, because neither of them has a separate Existence of himself; they are not divided the one from the other; one cannot be where the others are not; but wherever one is the others are also.

also. The Exiſtence of any one is not more S E R M.
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neceſſary than the *Co-exiſtence* of the other

Two: They exiſt *neceſſarily* together, and *eſſentially* imply and include each other, which no other Perſons or Beings do. And for theſe Reaſons we profeſs to *worſhip one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Perſons, nor dividing the Subſtance*: Since, as we have ſeen, it may be clearly proved, that there is *one Perſon of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghoſt*; though the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt is *all one, the Glory equal, the Majeſty co-eternal*. But now when, in order to expreſs their *Diſtinction*, we call them *Perſons*, or when, in order to expreſs their *Union*, we ſay they are all but *one Subſtance*; we muſt remember the exceeding great Difference there is between Perſons *Human* and Perſons *Divine*, and make proper Allowances for the vaſt Diſproportion of Circumſtances. We muſt not, becauſe every Perſon is a *ſeparate* Being among Men, imagine it is ſo alſo in the Perſons of the Godhead: Nor again may we ſuppoſe, that, becauſe one Subſtance or Being is but one Perſon, when applied to the Human Nature; therefore it is no more, when

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when applied to the Divine. We must not object Contradictions in the incomprehensible Nature of God, from comparing it too strictly with our own frail Nature of Flesh and Blood *.

I know not how to illustrate this more clearly or aptly, than by an Instance produced by a late and very ingenious Author † of a *Man born blind*. Were we to endeavour to give such a Person any Notion of the Nature of *Sight*; we might tell him it perceives several things at once, and things distant as soon as things nearer at hand: That it can reach the Sun, the Moon, or the Stars, which are some millions of Miles from us, as soon as it can a Pole or a Yard, or any thing as near us as ever you please. Now were we to give such a Description as this, of *Sight*, to one who never enjoyed that Blessing; and were he to conceive it after the manner of *Bodily*

* To this Purpose hear the learned Dr. *Clark* again before cited: "The *Unity* of God is an *Unity* of Nature or Essence: "As to the Diversity of Persons &c." to the End of the Paragraph. Dr. *Clark's* Sermons *ut supra*, p. 51.

So again the fair and open Mr. *Whiston*. "I believe for Instance &c." p. 43. &c. Excellent good Reasoning of both these Gentlemen: And it is pity that either of them should now be ashamed of it.

† *Leslie* against the *Socinians*.

Motion,

Motion, or passing from one Place to another on his *Legs*; how could he be ever able to reconcile the Contradictions that would follow from it? He would therefore be sensible that this was only made use of as an Allusion to him: And he would suppose Sight to be of a different Nature from bodily Motion, and that there is no real Contradiction in it, though he knows not what it is. SERM.
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And thus it ought to be with regard to the Doctrine of the *Trinity*: We know the Trinity is of a different Nature from three Men, or from any three things whatsoever upon Earth. And yet we must speak of it *after the manner of Men*, because we can speak of it no otherwise. But if we will therefore strictly apply the same Ideas we have of three Men, to the three Persons in the Godhead; we shall fall into as many Contradictions as the unhappy Person before mentioned. But then as such a Person would be sensible that the seeming Contradiction would arise only from pursuing the Comparison of the Motion of the Body and Sight too closely; so we believe that there is no Contradiction in the Doctrine of the Trinity; but that the seeming Contradiction arises only from applying too closely what is spoken of God, after the manner

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manner of Men. For we have no Words whereby we can speak properly of the Nature of God; as we have none whereby we can speak of Colours or Sight to a Person born blind. For as we cannot give such a Person any Notion of *Light* or *Colour*, but he must apprehend it as something that must be felt, or heard, or smelt, or tasted; (for we can explain it no otherwise than by Allusion to some of those Senses which he has;) So if there were any Words which could express the *Nature* of God properly, or as he is known to the Angels in Heaven; they would yet, for want of Capacities in us, be as unintelligible to us, as the Word, *Seeing*, is to a Man born blind. The Apostle hath told us, that when he was caught up into *Paradise* he heard unspeakable Words which it was not possible for a Man to utter, 2 Cor. xii. 4. the Reason very probably was, because, if they were uttered, it would not be possible for Man to understand them.

And this, I presume, is sufficient to clear the first Point, viz. the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, from implying any Contradiction. And the same Distinction will, if I mistake not, help us as easily to clear the other Point I mentioned, the *Co-eternity of the Son* with
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the Father, and of the Holy Ghost with the SERM.
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Father and Son. For here again they usually charge us with a palpable Absurdity. The Son we declare to be *begotten* of the Father, and the Holy Ghost to be *proceeding* from both: How then, say they, can the Son be co-eternal with him who begot him, or the Holy Ghost with the Persons from whom he proceeds? For must not he who begets a Person necessarily exist before him who is begotten by him, and they, from whom a Person proceeds, before him who proceeds from them? Since then we assert, in the *Athanasian Creed*, that *the Son is of the Father, and the Holy Ghost both of the Father and the Son*; why do we add, that *none is afore or after other*; but *the whole three Persons are co-eternal together*?

But to this again we answer, that this is still measuring from one Nature to another, from the Human to the Divine; when the latter is what we know but little of, and can only speak of it by Allusion to the former. In *Human Generations* it is true that the Father precedes the Son, and begetteth one that is younger than himself: But what is this to the Generation or Procession of the Persons in the *Godhead*? Of which we understand

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no more than that the Essence, which God always had without Beginning, without Beginning he did communicate, being always Father as always God. As to the imagined *Contradiction in the Terms*, we might reply that, even in *natural Causes*, that which is produced may receive its Existence, at the same Instant of Time with that which produces it. For though the Cause must be before the Effect in *Thought*; yet it is not *always* so in *Time*. Nay, it is *never* so in Time, where the Effect is unavoidable and necessary. For where the Effect flows necessarily from the Cause; the Cause cannot exist a Moment without it. For thus, to instance in the *Sun*: We know that the Sun begets *Light* and *Heat*: And yet our own short Reasoning will inform us, that it was impossible for the Sun to exist *before* the Light and Heat that issued from it. But on the contrary, could we suppose the Sun to have been *eternal*, we must suppose its Light and Heat to have been *eternal* too. They must have been co-eternal and co-essential with the Sun, the necessary Head and Parent of them both. And consequently the second Person in the Trinity being *necessarily* begotten, and the third Person also *necessarily* proceeding; it follows that each of them

I

must

The Credibility of Mysteries.

III

must have existed *eternally, co-eternally* with ^{S E R M.} the first Person, the necessary Fountain of ^{III.} the other two *.

And thus having shewed that even the most controverted Articles of our Faith, those which are charged with the *greatest* Contradictions have in reality *no* Contradiction in them; that they are so far from being *contrary to Reason*, that Reason *helps* us (though not fully, to comprehend them) yet to prove that they are not impossible: This, I say, being shewed, I hope to the Satisfaction of any reasonable Mind; I come now to shew

Thirdly, that it is no Objection to the Belief of those, or of any other, Articles of our Religion, that they imply some things that are *incomprehensible*, or *above our Reason*. And this evidently follows from what has been observed upon the foregoing Heads. I have there given Instances of several things which we all do, and all must of necessity believe, though none of us pretend fully to comprehend them. And though Reason alone, or Sense alone, or both together, without Revelation, may not, perhaps, assure us

* See Authorities for the Similitude in *Suicer.* in *Ηλιος* Num. 1. 2. lit. c. and in *Ἀπαύγασμα*.

SER M. as certainly of the Doctrine of the Trinity,
 III. as either, or both do of those several other
 Points ; yet Reason is no more *contrary* to the
 one, than it is to the other. They are all
 equally, in some Particulars, *above* our Reason ;
 but not one, more than the other, *contrary* to it.
 And sure there is a very wide Difference to be
 made between a Thing's *exceeding* our Understanding,
 and its *contradicting* it. In Things *above* our Reason
 or Understanding, the Proposition is supposed not
 to be level to our Capacities : We do not comprehend
 it, and therefore, with *Nicodemus*, we only ask, *How can these things be?* John
 iii. 9. Whereas in things that are *contrary* to Reason,
 the Proposition is always supposed to be fathomable ;
 and because we perceive and know it is impossible,
 we therefore pronounce roundly and positively, *This cannot be.*
 From hence then it follows, that the bare Incomprehensibility
 of a thing is no Argument against the *Truth* of it :
 And if not, then again it follows, that it is no Argument
 against the *Belief* of it neither : Because whatever
 is no Objection against the *Truth* of a thing,
 is no Objection against the *Belief* of it. Consequently
 the Incomprehensibility of the *Modus* or *Manner*,
 or of some other Particulars

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Particulars in the Articles of our Religion, is ^{SERM.}
no just Objection to our believing those Ar- ^{III.}
ticles; if so be it appears that the Articles
themselves are sufficiently revealed in the holy
Scriptures, which are the Rule of our Faith.
For if the Revelation be otherwise plain, and
such as we would accept of, in another Case,
and about Matters which we can well enough
comprehend; we ought not to think it the
less so, because the Matter to which it re-
lates is such as we know not how to fathom.
And here indeed a Believer's *Reason* properly
steps in, viz. not to enquire whether the thing
proposed be *comprehensible* or *not*, but whe-
ther it be *revealed by God* or *not*. To find
out this, Reason not only may, but ought to
make use of all her Faculties and Powers, to
call in all the Assistance she can get both at
home and abroad, and to determine at last,
with all the Judgment and Sincerity she can.
And if after such a serious, sober, impartial
and humble Examination, it appears that the
Proposition be indeed from God, and has him
for its Author; *Reason* has nothing more to
do than (as a great Man * speaks) " to rise
" from the Seat of Judgment and resign it

* Mr. Norris of *Reason and Faith*. p. 292, 293.

SERM. " to *Faith*, which either gives or refuses her
 III. " Assent, not as the thing proposed is com-
 " prehensible or not comprehensible, but as it
 " is revealed or not revealed.

Having thus gone through the several Divisions of my Discourse, I shall beg your Patience to draw two or three Inferences from what has been said, and then conclude.

First then, We are hence enabled to expose the Weakness of a noted and popular Objection, that because *Faith is a Rational Act*, therefore nothing above Reason can rationally be believed; an Objection that has nothing in it but Quibble and Fallacy; and therefore nothing more is wanting to confute it, than to bring it out of the Clouds, and to set it in a clear and proper View. If it were expressed in honest Terms, the Syllogism ought to run thus.

Nothing that is believed without Reason, can rationally be believed: But

Every thing that is believed, being above Reason, is believed without Reason:

Therefore,

Nothing that is believed, being above Reason, can rationally be believed.

Thus

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III.

Thus (without the Use of any more Logical Terms, not so suiting to a Discourse from this Place) all the Sophistry that lies couched in the Words, *rational Act, rationally, and above Reason*, vanishes at once; and we plainly see what is to be granted and what to be denied. The Major, or first Proposition, we allow, which indeed is only saying that nothing that is believed *without Reason*, can be believed *with Reason*: But then the second, or Minor Proposition is utterly false; it appearing clearly from this Discourse, that we may have very good Reason to believe many things which we cannot fully explain, and which therefore are above our Reason or Comprehension. I know indeed it is objected to us again, that *we ought to believe nothing but what is clear and evident*: But this is wrapped up in as fallacious and equivocal Terms as the former. If no more be intended by it, than that we are not to believe any thing *without clear or evident Authority*; or that we ought to believe nothing but *what is clear and evident as far as we believe it*; I know no Body that opposes them: But if it be meant that we ought to believe nothing but what is clear and evident in every Particular, nothing but what is entirely level

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III.

to our Capacities, and what we can explain, give a Reason, and account for; if this, I say, be what they mean, every Man that believes that Grass is green, or that a Load-Stone attracts Iron is an Instance of the contrary. And if the ordinary Operations of *Nature* be so abstruse, if *her* Secrets are beyond the Discovery of the most piercing Judgment and Reason; if after the most accurate Searches into *sensible* Beings, and things that we daily *see* and *handle*; if these are things which we cannot pretend to have a perfect Knowledge of; How unfit and unable must we be to comprehend and make out things that stand at an immense and infinite Distance from us?

But *secondly*, we may learn from the Doctrine of my Discourse, that it is the Duty of a Christian to make the *Scriptures*, and not his *Reason* or *Comprehension*, the *Measure of his Faith*: i. e. not to enquire or examine in the first place into the *Quality of the Object*, as whether a thing be comprehensible or not, and then, as it appears to him, to proceed in his Belief or Disbelief of its being revealed: But first to examine into the *Certainty of the Revelation*, as whether such a thing be truly revealed; and if it be, to believe it notwithstanding

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standing its being incomprehensible. For to ^{S E R M.} follow the first Method, *i. e.* to make our ^{III.} Reason the Measure of Faith, is plainly also to make it the Measure of Divine Revelation. It is to assert that God can reveal nothing to us but what we can comprehend ; which argues, that we have either a very low Opinion of God and his Perfections, or else a very high one of our own rational Endowments. But sure we should consider that finite Capacities can by no means grasp things infinite and boundless : Nay, we should consider that our present Powers of Knowledge are chiefly adapted to the things that belong to this present World ; and so are unable to conceive some things which, perhaps, we may be able to understand in the next. And therefore though the Truth and Existence of many things are discovered and revealed to us ; yet we can no more expect to have a distinct Idea of them in our present Capacities, than a Man born blind, though he believes there are such things as Light and Colours, can expect to have a Notion either of one or the other.

But *thirdly*, What has been said plainly shews (if duly attended to) the Danger of the Notion we are endeavouring to expose, from the direct Tendency it has to *overthrow*

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III.

and *subvert*, not only the Fundamental Articles of our Faith, but the whole Christian Dispensation, and indeed *all Religion* whatever. For if nothing that is above our Reason be to be believed, and it can be proved that several things above Reason are in the Scriptures of the New Testament proposed to our Belief; we shall be obliged in consequence to renounce the Scriptures, as proposing things to us incredible and false. Nor yet shall we stop here, but still be hurried on to deny the very Being of God himself; since Self-existence, Eternity, Omni-presence, Foreknowledge and other such like Attributes (which are necessary to a God) are as incomprehensible, and as much above our Understanding or Reason, as any thing in the Notion of a Trinity can be. So that from the Denial of three Persons (if founded only upon this Principle) we may be quickly brought to deny the one God; and from believing nothing but what we can comprehend, be led directly to believe nothing at all.

But *fourthly*, If some of the Articles of our Faith are so mysterious and incomprehensible; it certainly becomes us to treat and discourse of them with *Modesty* and *Humility*; not to be too inquisitive in our Searches
after

after them ; nor too bold and forward in defining and describing them. The Substance of the Doctrines is what we must defend and earnestly contend for, as being *the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*, Jude 3. But the *Manner* and *Modus* of them is not to be explained, because it is no where laid open to us in Scripture. This should restrain us from speaking of them otherwise than in general Terms, and in such as we find to have been made use of in the purest Ages of the Church. If indeed Innovators of the Faith should endeavour to misguide and delude the People, by an artful Misapplication of the old Terms, or by an Invention of new ones ; it then lyes upon the Guardians of our Faith, either to rescue the old Catholick Forms or Manner of Expression, or else to express the Catholick Faith in other Terms, more explicite, and not so liable to be perverted and abused. And if, when pressed by this Necessity, they are forced to introduce some new Expressions, which may not, perhaps, be so simple and well known ; *they* must answer for it, who made it necessary, by not resting easy and contented with those which, perhaps, were more primitive and plain. This, we trust, will not be imputed to those who

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III.

with Modesty, Humility and Faith, undertake the Cause of God and his Christ; but to those who abounding with a Wantonness of Wit, first lose themselves in a Labyrinth of wild Opinions, and then becoming more and more entangled and perplexed, are scarce ever reducible to a right Temper again. But let such of us, as are not so far involved, always endeavour to keep our selves free from Pride and a Conceit of our own Abilities and Strength, the Root and Source of all Error and Heresy. Let us remember that the Mysteries of our Religion are *things which even the Angels desire to look into*, 1 Pet. i. 12. and yet, perhaps, are not able to comprehend them. But whether *they* be or not, it certainly becomes *us*, (who are not Angels, nor *like* Angels yet) to wait for our Vision in the other Life, and to be satisfied and content, with other good Christians, humbly to believe and adore in this. To this End let us bear in Mind the excellent Lesson of the wise Son of *Sirach*; *Seek not the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy Strength: But what is commanded thee, think thereupon with Reverence, for it is not needful for thee to see with thine Eyes the things that are in secret.* Be

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not curious in unnecessary Matters, for more S E R M.
III.
things are shewed unto thee than Men under-
stand, Ecclus. iii. 21, 22, 23.

But, *lastly*, let us not close a Discourse on this Subject without remembring what the Text reminds us of, *viz.* that Christianity is a *Mystery of Godliness*. For if so, the Belief of it, surely, ought to have a special Influence upon our Life and Practice. So that indeed as the Denial of the proper Divinity of our Saviour, and of his co-eternal Existence with the Father, on the one hand, undermines the very Foundation of our holy Religion; so, on the other hand, does it much take off from our Obligation to Obedience, and dull those Affections which a Reflection on this Mystery must raise in our Minds. For what greater Obligation to Holiness and Obedience can there possibly be; than the Consideration that our Redeemer was no less than the co-eternal and co-essential Son of the Almighty God? This should, as it were, extort from us a good Life, which is indeed the best Evidence of our Belief of these Articles, and much beyond the Subtilty of Disputation. This shews that we do more than barely assent to the Truth of them; that we are affected and moved by them to produce those saving Effects in our selves, for which to be sure they
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III.

were first discovered. And thus living now in Obedience to the holy Will of God, revealed to us by his Son, through the Assistance of the Holy Ghost, we shall at last be admitted to the Sight and Fruition of his glorious Godhead, and sing Praises and Hallelujahs to the Blessed Trinity for ever and ever. In the mean while let us pray for the Security of our Faith in this Profession, in the apt and excellent Language of our Church.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy Servants Grace, by the Confession of a true Faith, to acknowledge the Glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the Power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this Faith, and evermore defend us from all Adversities; who art one God, one Lord, not one only Person, but three Persons, in one Substance: For that which we believe of the Glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any Difference or Inequality. Therefore with Angels and Arch-Angels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising thee and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory, Glory be to thee, O Lord most High.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

BEZALEEL *and* AHOLIAB : OR,
Men's Abilities and Skill the Gifts
of God, and their Professions and
Trades the Ways of Serving Him.

Preached before the Gentlemen educated at
 the MERCHANT-TAYLORS SCHOOL.

EXOD. xxxi.

1. *The LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*
2. *See, I have called by name, Bezaleel, the Son of Uri, the Son of Hur, of the Tribe of Judah :*
3. *And I have filled him with the Spirit of GOD, in Wisdom, and in Understanding, and in Knowledge, and in all Manner of Workmanship,*
4. *To devise cunning Works, to work in Gold, and in Silver and in Brass,*
5. *And in Cutting of Stones to set them, and in Carving of Timber, to work in all Manner of Workmanship.*
6. *And I, behold I have given with him, Aholiab the Son of Ahisamach, of the Tribe*
of

*of Dan ; and in the Hearts of all that are
wise-hearted I have put Wisdom ; that they
may make all that I have commanded thee.*

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IV.

WHAT an agreeable Return does this Day yield to every one that pays it its due Honour and Respect ! With what Complacency and Delight does the View of this Prospect fill the Soul of each of you that attend to Grace and adorn it ! For there is nothing more desirable to the Nature of Man, than Occasions of beholding and rejoicing in the Prosperity of those we esteem : And if the Friends, we would congratulate, be of the Number of those whom an early and disinterested, an intimate and long Acquaintance has endear'd ; our Joy is then heightened ; we not only see it, but share in it also, and make it our own.

And if so—— What numerous and various pleasing Sensations must this Day's Meeting, I say, minister to our Minds ! when so many, and such good, and such valuable Friends assemble and unite on purpose to augment, and all to partake of, one common Joy ! We are here with Pleasure to see, once more, the Associates and Companions of our younger Years, our old Partners in our juvenile

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venile Labours and Tasks ; by whose mutual Assistance, Conversation and Relief (this hopeful Train *, I doubt not, will Witness what I say) the Lessons and Discipline then instilled, however useful we may have proved them since, would not at that Time have relished altogether so pleasant and sweet. But though thus link'd for ever perhaps in Affection and Love, yet the Years advancing which were to draw us off nearer to the Business we were born for, *viz.* Action and Life, the Friends were soon obliged to part, and each of them to take a different Way, as their Genius or Interest, their own or their Country's Good required. The melancholy News that too too often afterwards succeeded, of some lost by Death, and others by the Frowns and Misfortunes of the World, has been balanced, perhaps, by the more welcome Report of others rising in Reputation and Character, in Station and Life. But this, though a Pleasure, has been still uncompleat ; as having been yet, with Regard to us, but little more than *Report* : — We believed and rejoiced in the Prosperity of our Friends ; but have wanted to see those Friends themselves, *to fill our Joy* †.

* The present SCHOLARS.

† 2 Tim. i. 4.

This

SERM.
IV.

This Completion of our Desires the present Solemnity amply yields : It shews us here the Friends we have longed for ; and returns them to each other laded with *Riches*, and dignified with *Honour*, the Fruits of *Wisdom*, Prov. iii. 6. Ch. viii. 16. human and divine, the encrease of those Seeds we once so amicably took in together. And whom our School, with a Parent's Fondness, anxiously entrusted to the University or Courts, to the Counting-house or Shop ; she now receives, or expects at least, with open Arms, remitted with Thanks, the *Glory*, Phil. iv. 1. 1 Theff. ii. 19, 20. of each of them, *their Joy and their Crown* ; assembling from the Posts and Stations of Honour to which they have severally advanced ; from the Palace, the Bench, the Camp, and the Exchange ; Ornaments of the Senate, the Pulpit, and the Bar ; eminent in the City, the Church, and the State ; dignified with the highest Honours in each ; filling or ascending, some the prætorial, others the episcopal, or primate's Chair.

On such an Occasion, and such a Call, what fund for Eloquence can the Orator want, whose Office is to perform the Compliments of the Day ? Leaving it therefore on him

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IV.

him to celebrate the *Triumphs* of our Feast, permit me to congratulate you on the much more solid and substantial Glories; the Lustre you cast on our School will again reflect on yourselves, if so be you make the Talents and Honours you shine with here, the Instruments and Means of securing to your selves greater Glories hereafter. And on *your selves* it must lie, if you do not rise proportionably in the next World, as you are eminent in this; Since the Gifts and Endowments which God bestows (of whatever Nature or Kind they be) he has faithfully promised (if duly improved) to acknowledge and reward. Whilst therefore we are exulting and boasting how many Professions and Callings our School has contributed to supply and adorn; it may not be amiss to season our Joy with a few religious and serious Thoughts, and to endeavour to impress it in such Manner on our Minds, as may continue to be of Use to us when the Day is past. Not that I would damp or allay your Joy, or abate that Chearfulness we are met to promote: — On the contrary, I would endeavour to make your Relish of it more exquisite and fine, by extending the Feast to the Entertainment of your rational as well as sensitive Soul. In Order to this, I would

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invite

SER M. invite you to feast a little on yourselves: —

IV.

I would set before you the Thoughts of whose Aid and Assistance it is to which you owe your Abilities and Skill : — I would shew you how closely you are interested, and, as it were, in Partnership with God, in the Exercise of your most secular Business and Trades ; — and even when pursuing your own Interest and Gain, how much you are employed in his Service and Work.

To introduce me to this, I have set the Words I read to you for my Text at the Head of my Discourse : Though a little Explanation of the Occasion and Sense of them, will be necessary to shew how they answer my Design.

I must therefore premise, that in the Chapters foregoing God had been giving some Instructions to *Moses* concerning the Fabrick and Utensils of the *Tabernacle* which was then in Design, and the *holy Garments* for *Aaron* and his Sons. This was to be a Work very curious and exact, and to be formed according to a heavenly Model, which God himself had shewed to *Moses*, *Exod. xxv. 9, 40.* when he called him up to the Mount. *Moses* therefore, being at the Head of a People who

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had been inured, in *Egypt*, only to base and servile Employments; to the Plough and the Spade, to the digging of Clay, and making of Bricks, *Exod. i. 14.* * might well doubt how he should find any Persons amongst them fit to undertake such a Work as this. For though there might be some ready enough rightly to take his Design, and to conceive and understand what he wanted to be done; yet amongst Men that had learned and seen nothing all their Lives, but to slave in the Ground, where should he meet with Hands to perform a Work to which so many different Arts, and the Exercise of such difficult Trades were required?—To rid *Moses* of these Fears, GOD bids him, in my Text, not to be careful and solicitous about this; for that he himself had provided Men that should have Skill enough to perform whatever he required. And two of these he notifies by Name; *Bezaleel*, in the second verse, and *Aholiab* in the sixth, whom he nominates and appoints for Master-Workmen. And to satisfy *Moses* that these were equal to the Business to which he had assigned them, GOD further acquaints him, that he himself would be their Master and Instructor, and,

* *Patrick* on the Place.

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IV.

by the Inspiration of his *Holy Spirit*, would infuse that *Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge* in these Matters, which their natural Genius, though never so great, could not of themselves so suddenly attain. *The LORD spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by Name Bezaleel, the Son of Uri, the Son of Hur, of the Tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of GOD, in Wisdom, and in Understanding, and in Knowledge, and in all Manner of Workmanship, to devise cunning Works, to work in Gold, and in Silver, and in Brass, and in cutting of Stones to set them, and in carving of Timber, to work in all Manner of Workmanship: And I, behold I have given with him, Aboliab, the Son of Abisamach, of the Tribe of Dan.* These are the two principal Men he calls to the Contrivance and Work, and these he promises shall want no Skill that is necessary to the making the Things he had commanded: The Jeweller's and the Engraver's, the Weaver's and the Embroiderer's, the Carpenter's, and every Workman's Art, should all concenter and meet in them, and in those he had given to operate under them. *For in the Hearts of all that are wisehearted (saith GOD) I have put Wisdom, that they*
may

the Gifts of GOD.

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IV.

may make all that I have commanded thee; i. e. All that have a natural Genius to such Arts as are necessary to the Work, I have called, or moved by a secret Instinct, to help and assist in it: And to enable them to forward it with Expedition and Exactness, I have endued them with extraordinary Wisdom and Understanding, such as they could not, in their present Condition, by the utmost Stretch of their human Wit or Ingenuity, acquire.

This is enough to explain the Text as far as the Occasion and Meaning of it is concerned. As to the Difference in the Sense of the Words, *Wisdom*, and *Understanding*, and *Knowledge*, which * some Commentators pretty much labour; and who *Bezaleel* and *Aboliab* were, any further than what the Text says of them; and particularly whether *Hur*, *Aboliab's* Grandfather, was the same with that *Hur*, who, together with *Aaron*, held up *Moses's* Hands in the Wilderness, *Exod. xvii. 10, &c.* † when the *Israelites* fought against *Amalek*, and vanquished him, and who is thought by some to have been

* *Vid. Paul. Fagius in Locum. Et Buxtorf. Hist. Arcæ, t. 2. n. 3.*

† *Vid. Rivet. & Patric. in loc.*

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IV.

the Husband of *Miriam*, the Sister of *Moses*:
These are Points which the Use I design to make of the Words does not at all require me to determine. The reason of my making Choice of them for my Text, is the Testimony they give of the *Assistance* and *Aid* which the Holy Spirit of God sometimes vouchsafes to Men in the Exercise of their *worldly Professions and Trades*; from whence I would willingly take Occasion to suppose, that whenever Men shine or excel in any Calling or Art, they only reflect Rays that originally descend from Heaven.

It is true the Text speaks of an *extraordinary* Inspiration, which the Exigency of the Case made necessary *then*, but which Artificers, that have human Means of Instruction, are not *ordinarily* to expect. But still we may infer from it, that there is an *ordinary* Assistance from the Spirit of God, vouchsafed to every Man in his Calling or Employ, provided it be but honest and just. For since all lawful and useful Professions whatever tend more or less to the promoting and carrying on God's great, and universal, and harmonious Scheme, of conducting and conveying Men safely and commodiously through a World where we have such abundant Needs

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to supply; we may be sure that his own Concurrence and Aid will always be ready to quicken and facilitate any Endeavours of Men to the Furtherance of the same good Purpose and End. I would therefore conclude, that the *Spirit of GOD*, which in *Bezaleel* and *Aboliab* was to be seen in such *strong* and *visible* Lines, may be discerned in *Miniature* in every Artist engaged in the same or any other Employ, though not set to work by so immediate a Call, or so directly in the Service of GOD. And if you will allow this Conclusion to be just, I then would make use of it to support the two following Observations, or Heads, which I propose for the Subject of the Remainder of my Discourse, *viz.*

I. FIRST, That Mens Skill, Understanding, and Excellence in any Profession, Calling, or Art, is to be attributed to, the Divine Assistance and Aid, by whose Holy Spirit it is inspired or infused.

II. SECONDLY, That the several different Occupations, Employments, and Trades, of Use in Life, are Ways which GOD appoints to Men, to render them helpful and beneficial

cial to one another, and serviceable to himself.

My Introduction having run out into a pretty large Length, my Time won't permit me to be so full on these Heads as at first I designed; I must therefore confine myself to some general Remarks, and then close the whole with a practical Application, in which I shall have an Eye to the Reason of my fixing on this particular Subject, upon the Occasion of my standing here at present.

I. FIRST then I am to observe, that the Skill, and Understanding, and Excellence of Men, in any Profession, Calling, or Art, is to be attributed to the Divine Assistance or Aid, by whose Holy Spirit it is inspired or infused. That this was the Case of *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab*, and of those that worked under them in the forming the Tabernacle, and the Utensils belonging to it, and the holy Garments appertaining to the Priests, my Text itself sufficiently proves. That this was, however, an extraordinary, and indeed a miraculous Case, we have already allowed; the Circumstances of the Time and Place requiring, that they who, in such Emergency, could

could have no other Instruction or Help but ^{S E R M.}
what must come immediately from Heaven, ^{IV.}
should be favoured with greater Assistances
from thence, than Men in no such Need or
Necessity. But this (as I have observed) is
no just Reason why we should confine the
Interpositions of Providence to such *extraor-*
dinary Cases alone: On the contrary, it is
much more consonant to our Notions of the
Divine Goodness, to suppose, that even in
the most *ordinary* Cases it is ready to help;
though where we are able to do something
of ourselves, we are not to expect that Pro-
vidence should do all. Where our own Di-
ligence, and Industry, and Application can
acquire or improve any Art or Knowledge we
desire to study or profess; there we are not
lazily to sit down, and wait till they are in-
spired, but with Labour and Pains to apply
and exercise our own Faculties and Powers,
and to make what Progress and Advances we
can, by the Help and Assistance of ordinary
Means. And when we have thus been just
to ourselves, we may then, with the better
Assurance, hope, that God will also do his
Part by us. He will help our natural Abili-
ties first, to try what Effort *they* can make;
and then if any thing truly needful prove be-

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yond our Reach at last, God will stoop to our scanty Arm, will let it down and hand it to us: What we are not able of ourselves to compass, he will, either by his own or some other's Aid, communicate and supply.

That this is not *beneath* the Care and Concern of Heaven, the Revelations we receive from thence sufficiently inform us: The divine *Wisdom* that inhabits there declares of herself, that as *Counsel, and sound Wisdom, and Understanding, and Strength* are *her's*, Prov. viii. 14. so also is it she that *finds out Knowledge of Workmanship, and witty Inventions*, ver. 12. compared with *Wisd.* vii. 16. Accordingly all the Instances of any superior Faculties in Men, which the Bible sets forth, are set forth as Instances not of what Men can do of themselves, but of what they can do when God assists them. That Solomon's *Wisdom excelled the Wisdom of all the Children of the East*, that *he was wiser than all Men*, that *he spake Proverbs and Songs, and of Trees, and of Beasts, of Fowls, and of creeping Things, and of Fishes*; is ascribed by the sacred Text, which gives us an Account of it, to that *exceeding Wisdom, and Understanding, and Largeness of Heart, which GOD gave him*, 1 Kings iv. 29—34. But
it

it would be endless to branch out into Particulars of this Sort: It may suffice to say, that there is no Ability, no Occupation or Calling of Life, whether high or low, but in which God claims what Men do in it. And the same Almighty Lord of Hosts, which declares, that *he is for a Spirit of Judgment to him that sitteth in Judgment, and for Strength to them that turn the Battle to the Gate*, Isa. xxviii. 6. declares also, that it is he who *instructeth the Plowman to Discretion, and teacheth him when to plow, and when to sow, and when to break the Clods of the Ground*, ver. 24, 26. So that he that gives us the *northern Iron and Steel* for Use, directs and instructs us in whatever Use we put them to; whether we turn them into *Plow-shares*, or *Swords*, into *Pruning-Hooks*, or *Spears*; whether we make them into *Weapons for War*, into *Tools for Labour*, or into *Instruments for Husbandry*; which two last we are especially told *the most High hath ordained*, Eccclus. vii. 15.

This perhaps you may think is making the Spirit of God *too easy* and *cheap*; especially in an Age that is apt to suspect almost every thing of *Enthusiasm* that supposes any Communication at all between God and Man.

Grace,

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Grace, in the Sense we have formerly used it, is, with high Names and Characters, now become a Word of Mockery and Scorn. And Assistances or Breathings from the Holy Ghost (even in the Affairs of our Spiritual Life) are seldom Subjects now-a-days, except of Laughter and Ridicule. But of all the Judgments I have deserved for the Abuses I have offered to his Grace, may God for ever avert that from me, of representing it as a Thing of Nought! May it always be my Care and great Concern to persuade all with whom I am concerned, that *there is a Holy Ghost*, Acts xix. 2. and a Holy Ghost to be received; if not now in it's miraculous, yet in it's ordinary and more useful Powers.

But my School-fellows, I trust, don't want my Instructions and Persuasions here: —I would not think so meanly of you, as to preach to you the PRINCIPLES of *the Doctrine of Christ*; — Heb. vi. 1. I would rather hope, that with relation to your ghostly and spiritual Concerns, you have received, and felt, and experienced *the Spirit, by the Earnest of it which GOD has given in your Hearts*, Ephes. i. 22. and ver. 5.

All then that I have to do, all at least that my present Subject requires, is to prevail with
you

you not to think that the Assistances vouchsafed from Heaven are confined to your spiritual Concerns alone;—but that if you encourage and are willing to accept them, they are ready to attend you, even in the Businesses of the present Life, in your Chambers and Studies, in your Warehouses and Shops.

To give you *sensible* Demonstration of this—To point out to you where and when it was, that you received any such heavenly Impulse I am here supposing, the Nature of the Thing will not suffer me to do. However, if you put the Question to me, and insist on an Answer;—Let me ask again—When did your Studies or Affairs succeed beyond your Expectations, or even beyond your Hopes and Wishes?—Often, I hope, you will all reply.—But perhaps you will add, that this was owing to a *lucky Hit*, a *happy Chance*, or a *sudden Thought*.—But who is it (permit me to ask once more) that *governs* Chance, and *inspires* Thought?—And if Thought and Chance descend from *Heaven*;—You may undervalue them if you please:—But I shall think them nobly born. To impute our Abilities and Success to *human* Chance alone—is to conceive meaner Notions of what we are, and what we do, than ever
Heathens,

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Heathens, with *their* poor, weak, and barren Helps, ever entertained of old. It is true, with *Heathens*, when Things went well, *Fortune* always received the Praise; but then they exalted *Fortune* to the *Skies*: They did not represent her (as we do now) a fickle imaginary Phantom below, but revered and worshipped her as a Goddess that claimed a Seat or Throne amongst the Deities above. And so far were they, in those ancient Times, from thinking that Providence had nothing to do with our worldly Affairs; that they imagined that the different Abilities and Parts, which distinguished Men in such a Number of Callings, could never be the Gifts of a *single* God, but that there must be as many Patrons in Heaven, as there were Arts, and Professions, and Trades on Earth; canonizing (as I think I have somewhere read) to the Number of thirty thousand in all: Gods enough to acquit them of assuming too much to themselves. They did not boast of their own Sufficiency; but always to one or other of these ascribed the Praise for every remarkable Information or Light, even in the most mechanical Trades *. And when a useful Secret has been discovered, we

* *Vide Maxim. Tyr. Dissert. 22.*

have

have heard of a *Hecatomb*, or a hundred Ox-
en sacrificed at once, as a *Thank-offering* to
the Gods. For as such Discoveries entitled
Men to be denominated thenceforward σοφοί*,
or *wise*; so they readily acknowledged the
Gift that rendered them so, to proceed from
the Fountain of Wisdom above. And thus
far it will become us Christians to imitate
even Heathens themselves: Only—what they
imputed to such a *Number of imaginary De-*
ities, we must ascribe to that ONE TRUE
God, in whom all the Powers of Heaven
concur; to that *Father of Lights*, from
whom alone all gracious Influences, every
good Gift, and every perfect Gift (as well of
Nature as Grace) *cometh down from above*,
James i. 17. Inasmuch that what St. Paul
asserts with relation to Abilities in the Work
of the Ministry, will equally hold good in
every lawful Calling of Life. *We are not*
sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of
ourselves; but our Sufficiency is of God,
2 Cor. iii. 5. It is to him that every Master
of his Profession owes his Skill. “It is he
(saith an ancient Father of the Church †)
“that gives the Musician his Ear, the Sing-

* See Patrick on *Exod.* xxviii. 3. and xxxv. 10.

† *Clem. Alex. Strom.* I. p. 281. *Parisi.* 1629.

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“ er his Voice, and the Statuary his Hand :
 “ It is he that finishes the Poet's Numbers,
 “ the Orator's Expressions, the Logician's
 “ Consequences, and the Philosopher's Speculations.” Every excellent Endowment, whether of Body or Mind, the Hand or the Head, the Fingers or the Brain, are owing to the Blessings of that God, who first made and fashioned them all. And he that created all Mankind of *one Clay*, has Power, and not only Power, but Will, *of the same Lump to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto Dishonour*, Rom. ix. 21. The same that made us, the Apostle reminds us, *made us to differ*, 1 Cor. iv. 7. And as not in our *Being*, so neither in our *Well-being* have we any Thing that we don't receive. But to that divine creating Hand, to which we are indebted for being *Men*, we are indebted for the particular *Distinction* we bear amongst Mankind. And he that in the infinite Scale of Beings placed us in a Rank above the *Brutes*; it is he that leads us every Step we advance and soar towards *Angels* and *Gods*. But it is Time I should proceed to the

II. SECOND Head of my Discourse, under which I am to shew, that the several different

different Occupations, Employments, and Trades, of Use in Life, are Ways which God appoints to Men, to render them helpful and beneficial to one another, and serviceable to himself. That *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab*, and the other Workmen in my Text, served God in the Business in which *they* were engaged, I have no Occasion to prove in Form to any one that knows for what Use the *Tabernacle* and the *holy Garments* were made. Not that I suppose that every Man who professes any Art or Trade, is engaged so immediately in the Service of God as these were, who were set to work by his own Direction and Call, and to a Work too that was to tend towards the promoting the Honour and Worship of himself:—I don't, I say, imagine this.—Nor indeed do I desire to consider this Instance, as an Instance of Men, whom God, as it were, hired and set apart to himself:—But my Meaning is, to consider them with respect to the Use and Service they were of to the rest of the People; and *then* to infer their Service to GOD, from the Benefit that accrued by their Labours to Men.

For the decent Performance of the Worship of God, God himself requires a Tabernacle, and sacred Vestments for the Priests.

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All could not have *Time*, or if *Time*, not *Skill* (even supposing there could have been Artists without Inspiration) to enter upon and go about the Work. And those that had Skill for the performing of one Part, were perhaps as unknowing as the most ignorant of them all, in what was required to be done in another. The making the *Ephod*, the *Breast-plate* and *Mitre*, the *Urim* and *Thummim*, and the *broidered Coat*, was very likely a Work beyond the Reach of many, who yet might excel, some in the *Curtains*, and others in the *Coverings*, and others again in the *Altars*, or *Tables*, or *Vessels*, or *Lavers*, or *Fabrick* of the Tabernacle: A nicer Hand might, again, be required in those that worked in *Gold* and *Silver*, than in those that were set to work in *Brass*. And they that *cut* and set the Jewels or precious *Stones*, might have proved but very useleſs Men, had they been employed in the *carving of Timber*. But as every one was assigned to the particular Work, his Genius or Ability, either natural or infused, recommended him to; the whole Work came out of their Hands finished and compleat; each Artificer helped to forward the Business of the others; and all together perfected a Building, in which

which themselves and the whole People<sup>SERM.
IV.</sup> found their Account, had the Advantage of worshipping GOD in a Way that he himself prescribed: And GOD, besides the peculiar Service paid in his House, was pleased and honoured with the Service of Men to one another.

And just so is it in the common and ordinary Affairs of Life:—Every Profession, every Art, and every Calling, that any Ways tends to the Service of *Man*, by that *Tendency* itself becomes the Service of *GOD*. The *Lawyer* and the *Physician* (let their Patient and their Client have no Cause to complain) will be owned, I don't doubt, for the Servants of GOD, as well as the *Divine*. Though by the Way, supposing the *Divine* to prostitute his Call, I shall also suppose him to have so much the greater Share in the Vengeance of GOD, as the Injury done to the Souls of Men exceeds any Harm to their Health or Estates.—But I have not Time now to expatiate and enlarge.—I must keep to my Text, or at least to my Heads: And that I am upon leads me at present not to have any Suppositions at all how far *Divines* may prove deficient; but how far Men who are *not* *Divines* may come up to them. And

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here I must go on with the Thought I had before—and must assert the *Physician*, the *Lawyer*, the *Merchant*, the *Tradesman*, the *Husbandman*, and, in a word, the *Man of the World*, to be as well in the Service of Providence and Heaven, as *the Man of GOD*. The Man of GOD is indeed more nearly and more highly the *Minister of GOD*, as he is the Representative both of GOD to Man, and of Man to GOD, in the Offices of Religion, as he is an *Ambassador for Christ*, to beseech Men in Christ's Stead, 2 Cor. v. 20. i. e. as (in the particular Case before us) he is the *Herald of Heaven*, to warn, and excite, and animate others to do their Duty in the several Stations in which they are placed. But still the Service he *does* to GOD, is not to be estimated by the Character and Relation he bears to GOD, but by the Good he designs and promotes amongst Men. And therefore if Men, though engaged in the *secular* Affairs of Life, conduct those Affairs so as to promote their Neighbour's Good, as far as their Bounds will give them Leave, and without any sinister View of their own; they need not I think question whether they are employed in the *Service of GOD*, since to do and really *perform* one's Duty (be that Duty what

what it will) is as much a *Merit* (if *Merit* in any Case be allowed) as to preach and proclaim it. And let the Nature of their Employment be ever so low and mean in itself, yet as they are helpful in those Necessities which God has ordained, and yet ordained no Help for, but the Assistance of Men to one another; they are truly the Ministers of Divine Providence, Servants in the Family, and Fellow-helpers in the Work of God. And provided they do but mean and intend the Glory of God, and Good of Men in what they do; God will undoubtedly accept and approve their Works of Nature, as Works of Grace, and esteem their *human* and *secular* Actions as Actions of *Religion*.

And having now done with the Doctrine of my Discourse, you will give me Leave to make a practical Application of what has been said, and to keep my Eye on the Occasion of my chusing to treat of this Subject particularly at present.

The Credit and Honour your Appearance this Day reflects on our *School*, we have already acknowledged: And what I have said since, will remind you, I hope, how to render

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it a true and substantial Credit to *your selves*.
 For since you have now heard, and, I hope, often consider, to whom you owe that Superiority of Genius, and Parts, and Character, which distinguishes you in the several Stations and Employments to which you have been called; you will also consider what Acknowledgments and Returns on your Parts you ought to make for it. I may therefore spare my Exhortations, because I trust you will be always ready and forward of your selves to ascribe the Praise and the Glory to God; and not assume to your *own* Powers, what must be referred to *his* Help. *Insensible* of your several Abilities and Parts, you neither can, nor need you be. Know them, and think of them as much as you please; — But then always be sure to know and remember the proper Names by which they are distinguished, *viz. Endowments and Gifts*. Gifts of *Nature* indeed they are generally called: — But still we know there is but *one* Giver, whether of *Nature* or *Grace*. And therefore whenever, upon a Reflection on yourselves, you may be apt, in your own Opinions, to value and applaud *your selves* too much; curb the growing Vanity and Pride with that Question of *St. Paul* (which fits all
 Men

the Gifts of GOD.

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Men alike, whatever their Calling or Occupation be) *Who maketh thee to differ from another? — And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. And temper but thus your *Excellence* with *Humility*, and then you are safe: Your Parts and your Abilities need not be lost and buried to the World: We'll see and admire them, and since we claim a Relation to you, we'll *boast* of them too. For *boast* of them *we* may, though *you* may not. We'll therefore acquaint People, and let the World know, where the first Foundation of them was laid; and tell them what *School* was made the Instrument, under Providence, of supplying the Publick with so many considerable Ornaments and Lights. But this we are to promise only upon Condition that you excel in *Goodness* as much as in *Skill*; and by how much you are superior to others in *Abilities*, by so much exceed them in *Virtue* and *Grace*. For otherwise the School will have no Honour from any Claim it can make to you; since it will be no Credit to it to say, such a *great* Man was of it, except he prove a *good* Man too. As therefore *God's* honouring and distinguishing you by the several na-

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tural Endowments he has given you, should incite you to pay *him* Honour again, by distinguishing your selves in your spiritual as well as natural Life; so the *Place* that, under him, first laid the Foundation of your Abilities and Worth, calls on you to grace and adorn it again by Integrity of Life; since otherwise you will be but as *whited Sepulchres, which indeed* (as our Saviour observes) *appear beautiful outwards, but are within full of dead Mens Bones, and of all Uncleanness*, Mat. xxiii. 27.

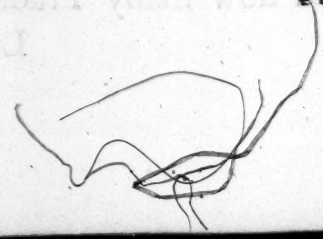
But the second Head we have had Occasion to consider, not only reminds you to acknowledge your Gifts, to be thankful to the Giver, and to make suitable Returns and Acknowledgments for them; but it also instructs you to make the best Use of them, not to trifle with, undervalue, or neglect them, but to apply them to the noblest Ends and Effects they are capable of producing. Though this indeed is nothing more than what your general Character as *Men*, as well as the special Distinction you bear as *Men of Parts*, demands of you all. For as no Man is born for himself alone; so no Man should live entirely to himself. But as every one helps to fill the World, and is himself one more whom the

the World is to provide for, and consequently one who adds to the Business the World has to do; so must he take his Quota or Share in the general Toil, and do what he can for the World again. And if this require more Labour and Care than our Nature (could it have its own Choice) would desire; it will become us, instead of repining at the Pains, to reflect on the Cause why it costs us so dear. We know very well how it came to pass, that Man, though seated in a Paradise at first, was yet banished from thence, to *till the Ground in Sorrow and Sweat*: And though the *Husbandman* seems principally concerned in the Curse, yet in Reality is it dilated to all. For if the Husbandman sweat to provide Mankind with the various Productions and Fruits of the Earth; *they* must also sweat in their Turns to render those Productions, in very various and different Ways, useful both to themselves and him. If the Husbandman labour to plow and sow; if, when the Time and Season for it comes, he mows, and reaps, and gathers into his Barn, and threshes, and winnows, and cleanses his Corn, and then brings it to different Markets and Fairs, and all to supply Mankind with Provisions for their *Bread* and their *Drink*; how many Hands and how many Trades does it afterwards re-

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quire, before either he or they can enjoy the Fruits of their several Labours and Toils in the *Loaf* and the *Cup*? If again it is the Farmer's Care and Vigilance in tending his Flocks and his Herds, to which we owe the *Meat* and the *Flesh*, which, by the second Charter of God to Man, *Gen. ix. 3.* is indulged to nourish and support our Strength; many Arts, and many Hands (more perhaps than we are aware of at first) must contribute and help to fit and make them ready for our *Tables*. And, lastly, if the same Flocks which supply us with Food, supply us also, by the Husbandman's Care, with *Wooll* for our Clothes; yet how many must sweat in different Ways, what various and different Trades must be employed, one after another, and how many laborious and toilsome Hours must each of them spend, before a single Fleece can decently be put on our *Backs*? So closely are the many Arts and Trades in Life, which seem, at first Sight, to be no ways concerned in the Curse passed upon the Ground, and those who are set to till it, interwoven with that of the Husbandman, who we are apt to imagine only feels it. And let it not be objected, that there are many Occupations and Employments in Life, on which

but



but little Exercise and Labour of the *Body* is ^{SERM.} spent; since these require the much more ^{IV.} wearisom Fatigue of the *Brain*, and perplex the *Mind* with anxious Cares, which are none of the easiest of the *Briars* and *Thorns* which Men are doomed to.

As to those *idle* and *useless* Wretches who live as if the World was created to be wholly subservient to them; and who like Drones, suck and enjoy the Sweets of the Hive, without bringing any thing into it again; with these I hope I have nothing to do: — I would willingly believe there are none such of us: — Else, if there were — The least and the tenderest Thing I could say, would be to warn them to take Heed in Time, that they don't, by declining the Share that belongs to them in the Curse of *this* World, plunge themselves deeper into the Curse of the *next*.

But I am striking out new Matter before I was aware, when your Patience, I know, tells me it is Time that I should only apply, and that in few Words, what I have offered by Way of Doctrine before. And the Doctrine of my second Head will remind you, not only to shake Hands with Indolence and Sloth, which I have now shewed, you must do

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do, if you would behave your selves like Men; but also to apply your selves to such particular Employments as your several Stations, Qualifications, and Abilities render you most apt to forward and promote. I can scarce imagine, that I have any Occasion to explain what I say, by adding, that I mean Employments truly *innocent* and *useful*; because the very Head whence this Inference flows, has shewn that the Professions and Callings of Men are Ways by which they are to express their good Offices one to another, and all of them their Service and Duty to God. And I need not, sure, tell you, that those Employments are far from answering this Design, which either have a natural Tendency in themselves, or else are abused by those that follow them, to serve the Corruptions and Debaucheries of Men, and to cherish and foment their Vices and Lusts. Trades have the Names of *Callings* given them, because they are supposed to be Employments to which Men are *called* by God: But if such Employments as these are *Callings*, they must be Callings of the *Devil*, whose Pimps and Panders such Men must be, who, not content with being his Prostitutes, act and trade as his *Procurers* too.

But

But I am speaking, I hope, to Men of different Principles and Thoughts; to those who know that *God's Glory* and the *Publick Good* should be the End and View of all their Aims, and who consequently (whatever their Callings be) will always make that Glory and Good their principal Design. And if you do, it matters but little what Station you fill, or what Character you sustain, in the numberless Affairs the World has need of; since, whether you stand *higher* or *lower* in Life, whether in a *more honourable* or *meaner* Employ, you are still of that one great Body of Men, in which *GOD* 1 Cor, xii. 16. *hath set every one of the Members as it hath pleased him*, and in which those Members which to us seem *ver, 22. feeble*, are oftentimes by much the *most necessary*. For as the Wheels in a Clock that are most out of Sight, and least observed, are frequently the principal Parts of the Movement, and those on which the whole depends; in like Manner, it is the *Use* and *Benefit* you are of to the World, and not the *Notice* the World takes of you, by which the Parts you have severally bore, will be estimated by him that placed you in it. A Thought which, now and then improved, would be a good Curb to *Ambition* and *Covetousness*,

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vetousness, and a good Help to *Satisfaction* and *Content*. Think of this, and you'll never repine that you have no *higher* Posts in the World than what you fill; since you'll remember, that, as you are, you are in the Service of God, the Master of us all, who values his Servants not according to the Dignity and Precedency of the Stations they hold, but according to the Integrity and Fidelity which they shew in them. Think on, and you'll never make *Lucre* and *Gain* your principal Aim, and prosecute your Callings only with a View of enriching your selves; since you will reflect that your Calls are not to serve your selves, but God, who gives you the Use of your Faculties and Skill, not to grind and oppress Mankind, but to help and assist them. An *Interest* in the Service you do for others you certainly may have; some Share in the Benefit that accrues to the World from your Labour and Pains should justly be your own: For *no one* (saith St. Paul 1 Cor. ix. 7.) *goes a Warfare at any Time at his own Charges: None planteth a Vineyard, or feedeth a Flock, and eateth not of the Fruit of the one, and of the Milk of the other.* And if *Moses* forbid to *muzzle the Mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn*, Deut. xxv. 4.

the

the Apostle will observe 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. that ^{S E R M.}
this was said, not for the Ox's Sake, but our's; ^{IV.}
that he that ploweth should plow in Hope, and
that he that thresbeth in Hope should also be
Partaker of his Hope. And if the Commis-
sion you bear in the Wars be general and high;
if your *Vineyards* prove fruitful, or your *Flocks*
abound; if your *Plough* speeds well, and
your *Corn* encrease; if, in whatever Affairs
you are engaged, you fairly and honestly
prosper and thrive:—Enjoy in GOD's Name
your Riches and Gains: Take them as the
Reward of him who not only sees, but also
blesses your Endeavours. Only take Heed
that you consult not your own Prosperity and
Wealth separately and distinctly from the
publick Good; because *he that maketh haste*
to be rich, the wise Man tells us, Prov. xxviii.
20. cannot be innocent. And though an *In-*
heritance may be gotten hastily at the Begin-
ning; yet he Ch. xx. 21. foretels, that *the*
End thereof shall not be blessed. Be sure
therefore, I say, to make the *publick* Prospe-
rity and Weal the Foundation of *your own*;
and not to seek your own Interest further than
it will arise from the Share or Part you take
in the Business of the World. And though
the Service you design Mankind may not
some-

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sometimes meet with *so much* Encouragement and Favour as you might reasonably expect; though instead of *accepting* the Offer of your Assistance and Help, the World neglects, and flights, and frowns on all you do; yet still you'll bear even this with Content; and provided that your Failure proceed not from your own Extravagance or Sloth; nor be the Effect of any Mismanagement of your's; you will still have this Satisfaction left, that you have endeavoured at least to be useful in your Generation, and that those Endeavours will be accepted by him, who regardeth not the *Success* of our Labours, so much as the *Intent*.

But I trespass now, I doubt, too far; and therefore shall release you, after I have made the usual Request, That having now performed the Devotion of the Day, you will be careful, with Relation to the festival Part of it, to make it a Feast of Temperance and Sobriety, of Charity and Love. And when you are rejoicing in one another, and glorying in the many Ornaments which our School has already produced; you will mingle your Wishes that it may still continue daily to send forth more and more. And as I dare say you all heartily desire it may flourish and abound; so let me beg of you chearfully to contri-

contribute your several Mites towards the lessening the Discouragements of it.

You all of you know (some of you by Experience) the Disappointment it must be both to a Youth and his Friends, when after an intended Dedication of him to the Service of God, and his Country, in one or other of the most useful Professions and Callings of Life, and after long Hopes and reasonable Expectations of a comfortable Assistance in the expensive Education that is necessary to it; what a Discouragement, I say, it must be to find themselves disappointed at last, when the *Son* is at an Age too far advanced to make his Choice of any other Employ, and the *Parents* not in Circumstances sufficient to support him wholly in that for which he was so long designed. And yet this is too often the melancholy Case. The ample Foundation, which makes a Draught from this School as fast as seven-and-thirty Fellowships become void by Resignation, Cession, or Death, cannot yet supply them fast enough to answer the Wishes of every Scholar, before he is of the Age of nineteen Years. To wait longer, the Founder's Statutes will not permit him. The Lad therefore, too old now to apply to a Business he might have been fit for before, and his Friends, I say, not able to subsist him entirely

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tirely of themselves at the University for which he was designed, is much disappointed and disheartened himself, and becomes a Discouragement to the Parents of others, to venture their Children at a School where they may study, and labour, and hope so long in vain.

This Discouragement, not very many Years ago, was removed pretty well by the handsome Collections that used to be made at the anniversary Meetings which then were held : And now it begins to be removed again by the happy and successful Revival of them. The Contributions of the three last Years have now been actually applied this Way : And several deserving super-annuated Youths feel and enjoy the Benefit of them : And others, I hope, will bless your Hands for the additional Supplies you will this Day make. And when you are forwarding so good a Design, you won't, I persuade my self, want Arguments to excite you to do it with chearful and liberal Hearts. You will think of your selves, when the Bason is held to you, that you are raising perhaps another shining Ornament to your School : You are going, as we say, *to make a Man* ; and I hope it won't lessen what you design, if I should add, that perhaps it may be a *Man of G O D*.

SERMON

SERMON V.

The Qualifications and Blessings of a
good Magistrate.

Preached before the Right Honourable the LORD
MAYOR, &c.

DEUT. i. 11.

*Take ye wise Men, and understanding, and
known among your Tribes, and I will make
them Rulers over you.*

IN this Book of *Deuteronomy* (or of the SERM.
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Second Law, as that Greek Word signifies) *Moses* repeats to the Children of *Israel* before he left them, (which he knew he was to do about two Months afterwards) the chief Laws which God had given them, during their Journeyings in the Wilderness for forty Years past, in their Passage from *Egypt* to the Land of *Canaan*. And this he does, because all that were of Age and Understanding, when the Law was first given, were now dead : And a new Generation, that

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were speedily to enter and take Possession of the promised Land, were sprung up in their Room. And *Moses* being not permitted to live and enter it with them; he therefore acquaints them, before he dies, with the principal Statutes and Ordinances, which God had given them, and by many warm and affectionate Exhortations endeavours to awaken, and to excite them to a strict Observance of them. Introductory to this he premises, in the three first Chapters of the Book, a short Narrative of all that had passed since their coming from the Mount of *Horeb* to the Time of his speaking. And one of the very first Things he recounts, was a Proposal that he had made to their Fathers soon after their Departure from *Egypt*, concerning the Appointment of a Number of subordinate Magistrates and Judges; that so the Burthen of governing every individual Person in so great a Multitude might not lye upon him. This he had done upon Counsel given him by his Father-in-Law, *Jethro*, Priest or rather Prince of *Midian*, *Exod.* xviii. 13, &c. Though in the Recital of it here he says nothing of *Jethro*, lest the *Israelites* perhaps, always a proud and conceited People, should have the less Opinion of the Advice, because proceeding from a foreign Adviser.

He therefore only relates what had passed ^{S E R M.}
between himself and the People. *I spake un-*
to you at that Time, Deut. i. 9. (i. e. I spake
unto your Fathers) *saying, I am not able to*
bear you myself alone. The Lord your God
hath multiplied you; and behold, you are this
Day as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude,
Verse 10. And indeed so God had pro-
mised Abraham *his Seed should be*, Gen. xv.
5. And therefore, though, *all the Souls of the*
House of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were
but threescore and ten *, Gen. xlii. 27. yet at
their leaving Egypt, 215. Years afterwards,
the Number of the Men only, of those that
were able to go forth to War, exclusive of
Women, and all in general under 20 Years
old, amounted to *six hundred and three thou-*
sand, five hundred and fifty Souls, Exod. xxxviii.
26. Num. i. 46. Too many indeed for any
one Man to bear the Government of alone.
Not that Moses was troubled at this great and
vast Increase: He blessed God for it. (*The*
Lord God of your Fathers (saith he) *make you*
a thousand Times so many more as ye are, and
bles you, as he had promised you,) Deut. i. 11.
But *How can I myself alone bear your Cum-*

* The lxx. here and in Deut. x. 22. read *threescore and fif-*
teen Souls, (agreeably with St. Stephen, Acts vii. 14.) including
five Names which they insert at the End of Gen. xlii. 20.

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brance, and your Burthen, and your Strife?
 ver. 12. How shall I be able of myself, how possibly can my Time suffice, to hear every single Complaint, which such a Multitude must have to make? How can any one Man alone remedy all the Grievances, and decide all the Controversies which must unavoidably arise among you? The last Word signifies *Suits at Law*, as we commonly speak: The two former Words signify other Differences which would necessarily arise between one Man and another, about such Things as are mentioned in the 21st, and two following Chapters of *Exodus*, which contain the Laws relating to them. The first Word which our English Translation renders *Cumbrance*, signifies the vexatious Proceedings of too many who get into their Hands the Management of Causes before a Judge: It means what, were I to explain it now, would require a thousand hard Words, all signifying harder Things, such as would discourage the patientest Man from bearing the Impertinencies, and indeed such as are beneath any one to practise, but Barreters, and those who have Meanness of Soul, to subsist upon the Gall and Spleen of Mankind, upon Enmities and Malice, upon Quarrels and Litigations, and who delight in instructing Men, how to worry and devour one another. But

But supposing Men to be more peaceably disposed, than generally speaking they now are, or than they can be thought in the Times of *Moses* to have been; yet in the Nature of Things, Disputes must arise, unavoidable Disputes, Cases nice and hard to be decided. And this must occasion Plaintiffs on the one Hand, and Defendants on the other; who, when neither desires any Thing more, than what is equitable and right, ought to have their Cause heard by some Person of Judgment and Abilities, that so Justice may be done on either Side. And when these Cases become numerous and frequent (as among Multitudes they must do) they must of Course be more than one Man can determine.

We will suppose again that the People under *Moses's* Command were as regular as possible, as little offensive to *him* in his Government, and as little injurious to the Lives, the Liberties, or the Properties of their Brethren, as upwards of 600,000 Men can be imagined to be: yet still some Irregularities would certainly happen, some Enormities of a grosser Size, and such as deserved the immediate Notice and Correction of a Judge, too many to bring before, or to wait for the Censure of, a single Man. This again must convince

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V.*Moses* of the Necessity of admitting inferior and subordinate Magistrates under him.

And this accordingly was the Method he resolved upon : But since it was the People's Ease and Benefit (as well as his own) he consulted in it ; he therefore in the first Place acquaints them with the Necessity of it ; and then, that he might not seem to prefer any Favourites of his own, refers the Choice of the Men to them. *Take ye*, or, as it is in the Margin, *Give ye*, i.e. *Chuse ye, wise Men, and understanding, and known among your Tribes, and I will make them Rulers over you.* *Jethro's* Advice was that these Rulers should be *provided out of all the People* ; meaning I suppose that every Tribe should provide their own : That so no Tribe might complain of their being overlooked, but, being governed by Men chosen out of themselves, might see that they were all maintained in the Possessions of their Liberties and special Rights.

But we are to observe, that though the Tribes had the *Choice* of the *Men*, they were to be given or presented to *Moses* for his *Approbation*. For so the Words plainly imply. *Give ye*, that is, *Present ye* wise Men and understanding, and known among your Tribes, such as *they* shall think fit to be Magistrates, and
I will

I will make them Rulers over you. So that though the *Choice* was in the *People*, yet the *Power* was from *Moses* : And indeed from or rather through none could it be derived but him. God himself was properly their King : He himself gave them Statutes and Ordinances and Laws, as he saw their several Occasions required. For their Government was a Theocracy * : And in that Theocracy *Moses* was now the Vicegerent of God. In him therefore centred all the Branches of Power that could possibly be transferred on any others. In such Sense were these chosen Men appointed Rulers over the *Israelites* : Rulers over the People as far as their Authority and Commission extended ; but accountable to *Moses* the supreme Governor on Earth, whenever they abused or exceeded their Commission. And *happy are the People that are in such a Case*, who have the Liberty to chuse such Men to govern them as they best approve ; and yet, if they should prove mistaken in their Choice, have Means of Redress.

So it is plain the *Israelites* thought it in the Case before us : For so *Moses* goes on, *Ye*

* Vide Dissertationem de Theocratia Judaica apud Spencer de Legibus Hebraeorum, p. 226—254. Edit. Chappelow.

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answered me and said, The Thing which thou hast spoken, is good for us to do, ver. 14. So I took the Chief of your Tribes, wise Men and known, and made them Heads over you, ver. 15. to decide all such Causes as in their several Spheres they were able to judge; Captains over thousands, and Captains over hundreds, and Captains over fifties, and Captains over tens; and Officers among your Tribes; i. e. Under-Officers of several Sorts; some to bear before those, who were invested with the Authority and Rule, the Insignia of their Office, others to attend them and observe their Commands, and others again to put in Execution their Sentences and Decrees. Four different Orders of Judicature, according as he could conveniently divide and sub-divide the several Tribes; some with more Authority, and some with less, and the less very probably subordinate to the greater, as the greatest of them all was to Moses who appointed them; and to whom all Cases of Difficulty and Weight, and Appeals, we may imagine, in all Causes whatever, were still reserved. For so the Sequel of the Context relates: And I charged your Judges at that Time, ver. 16. (i. e. the Rulers above-mentioned whom he calls Captains and Heads;)

Hear

3

Hear the Causes between your Brethren, and ^{S E R M.}
judge righteously between every Man and his ^{V.}
Brother, and the Stranger that is with him.
Ye shall not respect Persons in Judgment, but
you shall hear the small as well as the great :
You shall not be afraid of the Face of Man ;
for the Judgment is God's : And the Cause
that is too hard for you, bring it unto me,
and I will bear it, ver. 17.

Having thus the full Sense of the Context
before us, I shall now proceed to the parti-
cular Consideration of the Text itself, which
will point to Matter more than sufficient for
the Remainder of my Discourse, though all
suitable to the Occasion of this present solemn
Meeting. *Take ye wise Men, and understand-
ing, and known among your Tribes, and I will
make them Rulers over you :* Which Words,
weré they to be considered thoroughly, would
afford three ample Heads of Discourse, viz.

I. FIRST, The *Qualifications* required in
those that were to be appointed *Rulers* over
the People. They were to be *wise Men, and
understanding, and known among their Tribes.*

II. SECONDLY, The *Persons* to whom
the *Election* or *Choice* is referred, which were
the several Tribes over whom they were to
rule :

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rule: *Take ye*, or *Give ye*, as it is in the Original; i. e. *Chuse ye*, as the Word signifies.

III. THIRDLY, The *Person* who *deputed* them to their Office, and *invested* them with their Authority: And that was *Moses* himself, their chief Leader; He who was appointed over them by GOD, and under GOD on Earth supreme. Take ye wise Men, and so on, *And I will make them Rulers over you.*

Each of these Heads would require as much Time as your Patience would allow for a single Discourse: And therefore I shall fix upon one of them only, and that the FIRST, to enlarge upon, on this present Occasion, *viz.*

1. The *Qualifications* which *Moses* requires in those whom the several Tribes were to chuse for *Rulers* over them. Chuse ye *wise Men, and understanding, and known among your Tribes.* In speaking to which I shall

First explain the *Terms* in which these *Qualifications* are expressed.

In the next Place I shall shew how *necessary* those *Qualifications* are to form a *good Magistrate.*

And then I shall set forth the great *Benefits* and *Advantages* which such *Magistrates* are

are of to their Sovereign under whom they^{S E R M.}
act, to the People over whom they rule, and ^{V.}
the Honour which arises to themselves as
Rulers.

1. The *Qualifications* required are expressed thus. Take ye *wise Men*, and *understanding*, and *known among your Tribes*.
——By *wise Men* we may very well understand Men of large and *extensive Knowledge*, who have seen much, and made good Observations: By *understanding Men* we may conceive to be intended Men who have *Prudence* to make use of their Knowledge, who from past Experience can judge rightly what is to be done on future Occasions.

As to the other Character, *Men known*; some translating the Word [*jedum*] actively, think *ready* and *skilful Men* to be intended: But *Experience* and *Skilfulness* are properly included in the former Characters of *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*; and therefore I should prefer our English Translation, which taking the Word in the passive Sense, renders it *Men known*, and to which Rendering the additional Words better agree, *Men known among your Tribes*: i. e. Men of *Distinction*, Men of *Eminence* and *Note*; a Qualification very requisite

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quisite in a Magistrate, since it more easily conciliates the People to be ruled and governed by them. A mean or obscure Person advanced to Magistracy, would be in Danger of having his Person insulted and his Office despised: And therefore saith *Moses*, Take ye Men *known among your Tribes*. Men *known* for their *Wisdom* and *Understanding* before recommended, and also for such other Qualifications as are necessary to fit Men for so high a Trust. The principal of these are enumerated by *Jethro* who counselled *Moses* to appoint these Magistrates, and what Sort of Men he should chuse for the Office: As that Advice of *Jethro* is parallel to my Text, I shall take the Liberty to lay it open before me, and to suppose it a Part of my Text itself. It is in

EXOD. xviii. 21.

Thou shalt provide out of all the People able Men, such as fear GOD, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness, and place such over them, to be Rulers of thousands, and Rulers of hundreds, and Rulers of fifties, and Rulers of tens.

FROM which Words I shall infer, that when *Moses* (who refers the Choice of their

their Rulers to the People themselves) in-^{SERM.}
 struct the People in the Text which stands ^{V.}
 at the Head of my Discourse, to chuse Men
known among their Tribes, he intends that
 they should be known as for the two Cha-
 racters already mentioned, so also for those
 which *Jethro* recommends in the Text now
 read. As they must be wise and prudent,
 so also must they be *able Men*. By which
 Character some understand Men of *bodily A-*
bilities, or of *strong Constitutions*: Others
 think Men of *Substance* and *Riches* are
 meant: Others again interpret it of Men of
Magnanimity and *Courage of Mind*: And
 lastly, others imagine Men of *Ingenuity* and
Parts to be intended. And were I to give
 my own Opinion after them all; I would al-
 low them all to be in the right. For every
 Magistrate, I dare say, will confess them to
 be all necessary, for Reasons which my fol-
 lowing Head will shew. But let us first run
 over the remaining Characters, of which the
 next is, that they be *such as fear GOD*.
 Men truly *Religious*, who would *fear* to
 offend *GOD* by doing *wrong*, but *not fear*
 to offend *Men* by doing *right*. In the next
 Place they must be *Men of Truth*, which
 the *Jews* explain to mean such as follow af-
 ter

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ter Justice for Justice Sake; such as in their own Minds are affected to Truth, and have an Aversion to Injustice of all Kinds whatever *. *Hating Covetousness* is the last Character, which the *Chaldee* Paraphrase translates, *bating to receive Mammon*, which consequently signifies, in the Apostle's Phrase, a Man *not greedy of filthy Lucre*, 1 Tim. iii. 3, 8. but abhorring Bribes and all base Ways of making Gain.

Such are the Qualities for which the Men, whom *Moses* was to advance to Magistracy, were to be eminent and known: And so necessary were they held by the *Jews* ever after, that their Doctors tell us, in the most inferior Magistrates seven Things were required, which are much the same with those which the two Texts before us prescribe, viz. "Wisdom, Meekness, the Fear of God, Hatred of Mammon, Love of Truth, Love also of their Fellow-Creatures, and that they be Men of a good Name †."

And it may not be amiss just to observe that there was some Regard generally had to the *Years* or *Age* of Persons to be chosen:

* See *Maimonides* in *Ainsworth* on *Exod.* xviii. 21.

† *Maimonides* in *Ainsworth* on *Exod.* xviii. 21.

Else why are they so continually called ^{S E R M.}
throughout the Bible, the *Elders of Israel*, ^{V.}
the *Elders of the People*, and the *Elders of*
such and such a City: as in *Rome* and other
Places they were called *Senators*, *Fathers*,
and the like, upon the same Account of their
Age or Standing. And indeed among such
should we soonest look for the two first Qua-
lifications which *Moses* requires. For *with the*
Ancient (as *Job* observes) *is Wisdom*, and in
Length of Days is Understanding, *Job* xii. 12.
Not that Rulers are necessarily to be Men ad-
vanced in Years: But it is necessary they
should have the Wisdom and Maturity of
Judgment, which are ofteneft found in Men
of Years. And younger Men so qualified,
when they are associated with Elders, or
with Senators and Fathers, as many in all
Ages and Countries have been, have as just
a Claim to those reverend Titles, as those
who have waited longer for them. But I
must hasten to the second Branch of my Dis-
course, under which I am to shew

2. How requisite these several Qualificati-
ons are to form a good Magistrate. And first
as to *Wisdom* and *Understanding*, i. e. *Expe-*
rience and *Judgment* (which generally speak-
ing

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ing are the Fruits of Years;) these are so absolutely essential to Government, that it is impossible there should be any Government without them. For whoever wants these, knows not how to govern; and therefore though he may have all the other Qualifications which *Jethro* recommends, (however he may be distinguished for his Birth and Fortune, however to be esteemed for his Religion and Piety, however true in his Words and just in his Dealings, however popular he may render himself by an hospitable Living;) yet if his Understanding be imperfect, or his Judgment weak, unwise and imprudent must the People be who take him for a Governor, if the Choice be in themselves.

But though Wisdom and Understanding be thus necessary in the *first* Place, yet are they not the *only* Qualifications: The four named by *Jethro* are necessary also; and that because the more understanding and experienced a Man is who has them not, so much the more he has it in his Power to injure and oppress the People he should protect. With those Qualifications therefore should Magistrates be endued, and for those, before they are advanced to the Magistracy, should they be distinguished and *known*: Known as for
Wisdom

Wisdom and Understanding, so also for being ^{S E R M.}

Able Men, i. e. First they must be Men of a ^{V.} *Constitution able* to endure the wearisom Labours and Fatigues, which a patient Magistrate, desirous to do Justice and Right to all, must often undergo: Lest otherwise through his natural Weakness and Infirmities he be not able to endure a Course of long Pleadings, even in Causes that may require them, and so precipitate a Judgment, before he is thoroughly apprized of the Case. They should in the next Place be Men *able as to Substance*; they should have Wealth and Riches sufficient to maintain and support their Grandeur, and that in Proportion to the Height and Dignity of the Office they bear: Lest the Appearance of the Magistrate being poor and mean, he lose the Reverence due to his Authority. Thirdly they should be Men of *able Parts*; i. e. of a quick Apprehension and a ready Judgment; that the Help and Assistance, the Justice or Redress which Men apply to them for, may be speedily obtained; and their Sentence, though right, not lose it's Value, as sometimes it has happened, by coming too late. But fourthly and above all, they should be Men *able and stout of Mind*, Men of Courage and

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not to be brow-beaten or aw'd, by the Greatness or Splendor of any that shall happen to appear before them. A Man that has not this Firmness of Mind, the Son of *Sirach* advises not to take the Magistracy upon him. *Seek not to be Judge* (saith he) *being not able to take away Iniquity: lest at any Time thou fear the Person of the Mighty, and lay a Stumbling-block in the Way of thy Uprightness*, Ecclus. vii. 6. A Caution very answerable to an Instruction or Admonition he had given before: *Deliver him that suffereth wrong from the Hand of the Oppressor; and be not faint-hearted when thou sittest in Judgment*, chap. iv. 9. And to fortify and arm the Rulers of the Tribes against this Faint-heartedness seems to be the principal Aim and Intent of *Moses* in the Charge he delivered to them, so soon as they were chosen. I charged your Judges at that Time, saying, *Hear ye the Causes between your Brethren, and judge righteously between every Man and his Brother, and the Stranger that is with him*, Deut. i. 16. i. e. Be upright and impartial, not considering *who* the Man is, but *what* is his Cause. *Ye shall not* (he goes on) *respect Persons in Judgment*, ver. 17. No

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Favour or Affection must ever be shewed to the nearest Relation, or the dearest Friend *
 Nor any more Deference or Regard to the Rich, than what is paid to the Poor. *But ye shall hear the small as well as the great: Ye shall as patiently attend the Cause of the one as ye do of the other: Ye shall not be afraid of the Face of Man, for the Judgment is GOD's.* The Magistrate you see must be able to bear up against the Frowns and the Threats of the Powerful and the Great. Fearless and intrepid, he must remember he represents the Person of GOD: He sits in GOD's Seat: The Sentence he gives must be obeyed as GOD's; and therefore no other must he be prevailed on to give, than what, he believes, GOD himself would pronounce. The very Charge which *Jehoshaphat*, many hundred Years afterwards, gave to the Judges whom he appointed over the Cities of *Judah*. *Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for Man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the Judgment, 2 Chron. xix. 6. i. e. As GOD's Ministers you act, and by his Autho-*

* Neque contra Rempublicam, neque contra Jusjurandum, ac Fidem, Amici Causâ Vir Bonus faciet, ne si Judex quidem erit de ipso Amico. Ponit enim Personam Amici, cum induit Judicis. *Cicero, De Officiis. L. 3. c. 10*

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erty: And therefore be assured if you prostitute not your Trust, HE will be present to support you in the Discharge of it. Fear no Man but GOD alone: For *he standeth in the Congregation of Princes, he is a Judge among Gods*, Psalm lxxxii. 1. HE therefore is to be always feared: And accordingly the next Qualification which *Jethro* requires in the Rulers which *Moses* was to place over the People, was, that they be

Such as fear GOD: Without which religious and godly Fear, a Man's natural Boldness will but prompt him the more to play the Tyrant, and to pronounce arbitrary and unjust Decrees. Our Saviour speaking of an *unjust Judge in a City*, that would do no Right but for the Procurement of his own Quiet and Ease, describes him as one that *feared not GOD, neither regarded Man*, Luke xviii. 2. A Judge consequently from whom no Justice could be expected. The Fear of GOD being the only Restraint a Judge, at least an absolute one, can have. And therefore the last Words which *David* spake, *i. e.* the last which the Holy Ghost spake by him, were spoken purposely to inculcate this Fear into all that should afterwards succeed to his Throne; and, that they might make
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the deeper Impression, are introduced with SERM.
 great Solemnity. *David, the Son of Jesse,* V.
said, and the Man who was raised up on high,
the Anointed of the GOD of Jacob, and the
sweet Psalmist of Israel, said,—The Spirit of
the LORD spake by me, and his Word was in
my Tongue: The GOD of Israel said, the
Rock of Israel spake to me,—HE THAT
 RULETH OVER MEN, MUST BE JUST,
 RULING IN THE FEAR OF GOD, 2 Sam.
 xxiii. 1—3. A Maxim which *Jehoshaphat*,
 one of those few of *David's* Successors that
 walked in his Ways, well remembered, when
 he came to visit and reform his People, and
 to appoint Judges over his several Cities.
 For to the Words abovesaid from the In-
 structions given them by that King, he im-
 mediately subjoins—*Wherefore now, let the*
Fear of the LORD be upon you, 2 Chron.
 xix. 7. And indeed even the Heathens
 thought it so necessary that the Magistrate
 should be awed and influenced by their
 Gods; that anciently the Courts of Judica-
 ture were held, in most Places, very near
 their Temples, and in some Places in them,
 that the Reverence of the Deity might make
 a stronger Impression on the Minds of those
 who presided in them. And in *Æthiopia*

particularly, above the Judges, who were used to seat themselves on a lower Bench, twelve Chairs were placed higher for their Gods, whom they supposed, though invisible, to be present amongst them *.

But let us proceed : The next Qualification which *Jethro* requires is that Magistrates be *Men of Truth*, i. e. Men, who loving Truth themselves, will, though it cost them Time and Pains, be sure to sift it out in others : Men who will be deaf, as to impertinent Calumnies and Reproaches on the one hand, so to Adulation and Flattery on the other. And to such a steadfast Attachment to Truth does God call and excite Judges and People both, by his Prophet *Zachariah*. *These* (saith he) *are the Things ye shall do : Speak ye every Man the Truth to his Neighbour : Execute the Judgment of Truth and Peace in your Gates* (i. e. in the Gates of the City, in which in those Days their Courts of Judicature were held;) *And let none of you imagine Evil in your Hearts against his Neighbour; and love no false Oath : For all these are Things that I hate, saith the LORD,* Zech. viii. 16, 17. And as the Heathen Nations (as we have just now seen) endea-

* *Plato de Legibus*, L. 6.

voured to impress on their Magistrates and Judges an Awe of their *Gods*; so did they also use all Means possible to preserve in them an inviolable Inclination to *Truth*. At *Athens*, in the famous Court of *Areopagus*, the most awful and solemn one of all *Greece*, whoever pleaded any one's Cause, was confined to set forth the naked Fact. He was not allowed to flourish and harangue: No Ornaments of Speech were indulged him; nor was he suffered to apply to the *Passions* of the Judges, for they were supposed to have none: *They* were always to resemble the Immortals, and to keep inflexible in the Paths of Truth. In *Egypt* we have another illustrious Proof of the sacred Regard which the Magistrates were always supposed to have to this Virtue. Their Chief Magistrate wore about his Neck a Chain of Gold, from which hung at his Breast an Image of Sapphire, adorned with other precious Stones, to which they gave the Name of *TRUTH*; and presumed that he who wore this Emblem so near his Heart, would never suffer any Thing but Truth to proceed from it *.

* *Ælian. Hist. Var. L. xiv. c. 34. Diodor. Sicul. Biblioth. Hist. L. i. p. 45, 68.*

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quires is *bating Covetousness*, i. e. *bating to receive Mammon*, as it is in the *Chaldee*, or *bating a Gift*, as the *Syriack* renders it: And so good *Jehoshaphat*, be sure, understood it, who concludes his Charge, twice cited already, with a Warning against it. That it may not suffer by being cited Piece-meal, I shall now read the whole together. *He set Judges in the Land, throughout all the fenced Cities of Judah, City by City. And said to the Judges,—Take heed what ye do: For ye judge not for Man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the Judgment. Wherefore now, let the Fear of the LORD be upon you: Take heed and do it: For there is no Iniquity with the LORD our GOD, nor Respect of Persons, nor Taking of Gifts, 2 Chron. xix. 5, 6, 7. Respect of Persons, and Taking of Gifts, is here, we see, represented as Iniquity; as an Iniquity which all who represent God should abhor; and all do represent him, who act by his Authority. Nor is there any Vice more often prohibited, or more heavily condemned, in Scripture than this. In that Collection of Laws relating to Causes between Man and Man, according to which Moses's Rulers were to govern the People,*

ple, the *Taking of Gifts* is expressly forbid. SERM.
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Thou shalt take no Gift, for a Gift blindeth the Wise, and perverteth the Words of the Righteous, Exod. xxiii. 8. Deut. xvi. 19. i. e. as the wise Man explains it, *Presents and Gifts blind the Eyes of the Wise, and stop his Mouth that he cannot reprove*, Ecclus. xx. 29. In our modern Language, they *cast a Mist before his Eyes*, hinder a Man from seeing, who otherwise would have been perspicacious to discern between Truth and Falshood, between Good and Evil; and who, had he not been in this Manner perverted, would of himself have pronounced an upright Judgment. If an Instance be of any Use to confirm what I say, we have a remarkable though a melancholy one in *Samuel's Sons*, after they were appointed Judges in *Israel*. Their good old Father we may reasonably suppose was not wanting to train them up in the Ways of Righteousness; nor can we imagine that he would have trusted them with the Power of governing, had they not, till that Time, given Hopes that he might safely set them over the People. And yet no sooner were they advanced to that Dignity, but through *the Love of Money, the Root of all Evil*, 1 Tim. vi. 10. they degenerated
and

SERMON. and immediately made the People weary of
 V. their Government. For so the Holy Text
 tells us, *They walked not in the Ways of their
 Father, but turned aside after Lucre, and
 took Bribes, and perverted Judgment,* 1 Sam.
 viii. 3. The one is a natural Consequence
 of the other : For a Gift is so powerful, that
*whithersoever it turneth (saith Solomon) it
 prospereth,* Prov. xvii. 8. *A Man's Gift
 maketh Room for him, and bringeth him be-
 fore great Men,* chap. xviii. 16. The
 Temptation therefore being so strong, it is
 fit that such only should be set where it
 reaches, as are thought most likely and able
 to resist it. Consequently Men chosen to
 Magistracy should be Men that *bate Covetous-
 ness,* such as are known to be averse to the
 doing any Thing mean and indirect for the
 Sake of Gain ; such as, there is Reason to
 believe, will not be worked upon by Intreaty
 or Bribe : Such, in a Word, as would by
 no Means whatever be prevailed on to pro-
 nounce a *wrong* Judgment, nor take a *Gra-
 tuity* for pronouncing a *right* one. For even
 this latter is, in the Eye of all Laws, both
 of God and Man, Extortion and Fraud. It
 is *selling* that Justice, which both by his Of-
 fice and Oath he is bound to dispense *freely*.
 And

And it is much to be feared that a Man who ^{S E R M.}
sells a *right* Sentence, were the adverse Party ^{V.}
to bid higher, would sell a *wrong* one.

3. But having sufficiently seen how requisite these several Qualifications are to form a good Magistrate, it is Time to proceed to the *Benefits* and *Advantages* accruing from such Magistrates to their *Sovereign* under whom they act, to the *People* over whom they rule, and the *Honour* arising to *themselves* as Rulers.

And first, As to the *Sovereign* or *Supreme Magistrate*, by and under whose Authority they act: To wave saying any thing further here of the Expediency, and indeed the Necessity, of dividing a Burthen amongst many, which it is impossible for one or a few to bear: Let us only suppose (the Reins of the Government themselves being placed in the Hands of one whose own whole Aim and Study it is to secure and advance the Ease, the Quiet and Prosperity of his People) that the subordinate Magistrates acting under him, the *Princes*, the *Governors*, the *Captains*, the *Judges*, the *Treasurers*, the *Counsellors*, the *Sheriffs*, and all the *Rulers of the Provinces*, Dan. iii. 2. are all such as *Moses* and *Jethro* describe

SERM.

V.

describe in my Text : that they are all Men of Wisdom and Skill, governing the People in their several Districts in the Fear of God, with Righteousness and Truth ; all combining conscientiously to discharge their Offices and Trusts ; all conspiring so far as their respective Powers extend, to promote universal Harmony and Peace. Blessed with such a Magistracy how *heavenly* may a King imagine his *earthly* Kingdom to be ! When He who himself, presiding at the Head of the Legislature, is, with all his Watchfulness, Thoughts, and Care, providing and enacting Laws for the Welfare and Benefit of his Kingdoms in general ; shall hear and feel that his several Provinces, Cities and Communities are each of them happy among themselves ; every one maintained in a peaceable Possession of their Properties and Rights ; that Vice, wherever it is discovered is punished, and, as much as possible, kept under and suppressed ; and that Virtue through Countenance and Encouragement thrives ; and all by the wise Administration of those who are happily entrusted with the Execution of the Laws ! When the Representatives of the *Royal Person* shall thus exert the *Regal Power* ; as they will certainly contribute

to

to the *Glory* of his Reign, so probably will ^{S E R M.} they add to the *Length* of it also, by multi- ^{V.}plying his Days. For (as *Jethro* told *Moses*, Exod. xviii. 22.) the Burthen of the Government, by such a Partition, will become *easier to himself*, (and I may add more pleasant and desirable too;) and so shall he be much more *able to endure*, i. e. as he shall not be worn out by the Fatigue of administering the whole Government himself; so neither shall he be teased, or harassed and perplexed by the Clamours of the People, complaining of the Grievances and Oppressions they suffer through the Mal-Administration of those who are entrusted to govern under him. All such Complaints will be prevented by the wise Administration of Justice, whilst the Administration shall be in such Hands as we are now supposing. For as *Jethro* goes on, not only the supreme Magistrate, the Leader of the People, but also

All the People themselves shall go to their several Places in Peace, i. e. Besides the general Quiet and Peace which such Rulers in their several Stations will preserve; besides the Security of the Properties and Rights which they will also tenderly defend and protect: Besides *the Punishment of Wickedness*
and

and Vice, and the Maintenance of true Religion and Virtue, which we pray such Magistrates may always endeavour; we may trust and be assured that GOD will also hear our Prayers, and *grant to all that are put in Authority*, (provided they are sensible it is *his Authority*) both Ability and Grace, *truly and indifferently to minister Justice*, even to every Individual that shall apply to them for it. And many Applications, be sure, there must be in all Communities: Many Cases of Law or Equity to be decided: All which an upright Judge, *attending continually on this very Thing*, Rom. xiii. 6. will hear and determine with such Dispatch, that if the Parties themselves be not peevish and litigious, they shall soon return to their own Homes and their own Business, with their Disputes ended, and their Minds quieted, perfectly easy and reconciled.

And as good Magistrates are of such Advantage, as they are such Blessings indeed to the Prince and the Subject; so do they acquire (and very deservedly too) *high Honour and Dignity to themselves*. For they not only represent the Prince, by whose Authority and Appointment they act; but they also represent the Person of him, *by whom Kings* them-

themselves reign, and by whom *Princes de-* SERM.
V.
cree Justice, Prov. viii. 15. For though
Civil Magistrates are all Subjects to the King
(from which Subjection not the highest Of-
fice or Dignity can exempt;) and though even
as Magistrates they are subordinate to him, as
being appointed and constituted by him; yet
still the Power they exert is a Branch of the
Royal Power, and consequently God's. *For*
there is no Power (saith St. Paul) *but of*
GOD. The Powers that be (in whomsoever,
or in whatever Degree) *are all universally*
ordained of GOD, Rom. xiii. 1. Higher or
Lower it is all from him. In *the King as*
Supreme it is *immediately* from God; in sub-
ordinate Governors it is *mediately* from him,
as being derived to them through the King.
And therefore as St. Peter tells us, *every*
Ordinance of Man is to be *submitted to*; so
he immediately subjoins that it is to be sub-
mitted to *for the Lord's Sake*, 1 Pet. ii. 13,
14. *Submit yourselves* (saith he) *to every*
Ordinance of Man, i. e. to every Human
Power, *for the Lord's Sake*; *whether it be to*
the King, as supreme, or unto Governors, as
unto them that are sent by him, for the Pu-
nishment of evil Doers, and for the Praise
of them that do well.

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V.

Two very noble and godlike Employes ; such as will intitle the Magistrate who attends them, to that Character of *St. Paul*, *He is the Minister of GOD to thee for Good*, Rom. xiii. 4. For he is as much GOD's Minister in *Temporal* Affairs, as one that waits at the Altar is in *Spiritual* : He is certainly his *Minister*, as ruling *by his Power* ; and so long as he also rules *to his Glory*, he is his Minister as useful and serviceable to the *supporting* and *maintaining* Religion, as the Ecclesiastical Minister is in *teaching* and *instilling* it. And so far may they always go Hand in Hand ! May the Ministers of Religion always preach up Submission and Obedience to the Civil Magistrates ! and may the Civil Magistrates always protect, second, and enforce the Precepts of Religion ! And so long as they do thus, so long as the temporal Powers shall restrain the Infringement and Mockery of GOD's universal and eternal Laws ; so long as they shall exert themselves in suppressing all Immorality and Profaneness, the open and scandalous Profanation of his Holy Name, the barefaced and most shameless Pollution of his Sabbaths, the blaspheming of every Thing that is Holy and Sacred (to all which the Power and even Zeal of the

the Magistrate was never more needful than ^{S E R M.}
now;) So long as this shall be the Care of ^{V.}
the Magistrates and Ministers of the State,
the Ministers of the Gospel will always bear
them most reverend Regard: We shall in-
struct (with Chearfulness and Alacrity) our
Congregations to do the same; to respect and
honour them not only as *the Ministers of*
GOD, but as being *Gods*. For so GOD
himself declares and pronounces them to be;
as our Blessed Saviour himself witnesseth, the
best Commentator that ever was. *I have*
said ye are Gods, and all of you are the Chil-
dren of the most High, Psalm lxxxii. 6. John
x. 34. *i. e.* I have put my Majesty upon
you; and though you are but Men, yet have
I ennobled you to such Dignity on Earth, as
my Celestial Ministers bear in Heaven. So
excellent a Name from GOD himself have
Magistrates obtained, and having obtained it,
may they always be what the Name imports!
May they feel more Sparks of the Deity in
them! May they express the Image and Si-
militude of GOD, more lively than the rest
of fallen Mankind are used to do! In a
Word, may they endeavour, and succeed in
their Endeavours as far as they can, to make
us imagine with the *Lycaonians* of old, that

SERM. *the Gods are come down to us in the Likeness*
 V. *of Men, Acts xiv. 11.*

May such Magistrates, such Gods, always
 preside over this great and capital City!
 What Tyre boasted, may she in Truth and
 Reality find! May her Merchants be Princes,
 and her Traffickers the Honourable of the
 Earth! Isa. xxiii. 8. May the Heads of
 her several Tribes and her Elders be still
 more honourable! May all that are clothed
 with Scarlet, be covered with the Robe of
 Righteousness, Dan. v. 16, 29. Isa. lxi. 10.
 Or to borrow an Expression of the Son of
 Sirach, with a small Variation—*When they*
put on the Robe of Honour, may they also be
clothed with the Perfection of Glory,—and
make the Garment of Honour Holy! Eccclus.
 l. 11.

To come nearer to the Occasion of this
 Day's Assembly; may the Chief Ruler of this
 Crowning City be always such, as the En-
 signs of his Office, and the Marks of his Di-
 stinction intimate he should be! May the
 Sword, which speaks him the Minister of
 GOD, be never taken up or born in vain!
 May it always be used for the Punishment of
 evil Doers, or for the Protection and Praise

of them that do well! May the *Mace*, the ^{SERM.}
Emblem of the *Regal* Power, remind him ^{V.}
how much the *Crown* is interested in the Of-
fice he bears! May the *Chain* always have
the solid and essential Jewel of *Truth* appen-
dent to it! May the *Chair* ever be seated
under the Influence of that Omnipresent All-
seeing God, whose Glory is seated on the
Throne on high! And may the ensuing and
every succeeding Election present one to it, as
wise and understanding, as well known among
your Tribes for his *Abilities* of all Kinds, for
the *Fear of GOD*, for the Love of *Truth*,
for *Hatred of Covetousness*, *Bribery* and *Cor-*
ruption, for *Fidelity* to his *Prince*, for doing
Justice to the *Subject*, and for the acquiring
of *Reputation* and *Honour* to himself, as He,
who now fills it, has always been.



SERMON VI.

St. JOHN's Test of *knowing Christ*, and
being *born of him*.

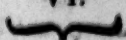
Preached against the *Methodists*.

I JOHN ii. 3.

*Hereby we do know that we know him, if we
keep his Commandments.*

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THESE Words (together with great Part of the Epistle from whence they are taken) are levelled by the Apostle against the Sect of the *Nicolaitans*, whose *Deeds* and *Doctrines* Christ, (in the Epistles which he orders the same Apostle to write to the Churches of *Ephesus* and *Pergamus*, Rev. ii. 6, 15.) declares that he hates. A Sect which (from whomsoever they received their Name) were certainly a most filthy and abominable one. They boasted, it seems, of I don't know what *Knowledge* and *Love* they had, beyond other Men, of God and of Christ:

Christ: And in this Knowledge they placed ^{S E R M.} the whole of Religion, without bearing any ^{VI.}  Regard or Esteem to a holy, religious or moral Life. But arrogantly confiding in their supposed *profound Knowledge of Mysteries and Secrets*, which they pretended were revealed peculiarly to *them*; they assumed the Title of *GOD's Elect*, his *Favourites* and *Sons*; and looking upon themselves as above all Law, and exempt from all Rules, they called their Lewdnesses and Debaucheries *Holy Commu- nions*; and whatever Lasciviousness or Impurities they should commit, they were sure nothing would be imputed to them as Sin *.

To prevent such hellish Doctrines and Practices from spreading in the Church, the Apostle sets himself through this whole Epistle to represent G O D in his true Nature. And after a short Introduction, thus he begins; *This is the Message* [or this is the Declaration] *which we have heard of him*, (i. e. from Christ) *and declare* [again] *unto you, that GOD is Light* (i. e. pure as the Light) *and in him is no Darkness* (no Impurity) *at all*, Ch. i. 5. *If we say that we have Fellowship with*

* Clem. Alex. Strom. 2. p. 401. and Strom. 3. p. 436. and Epiphani. Hæres. 25.

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him, and walk in Darknes [or Uncleanness] we lie and do not the Truth, ver. 6. If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us, ver. 8. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar himself, Ch. ii. 4. and maketh GOD a Liar too, Ch. i. 10. i. e. he directly giveth GOD the Lie. For he that committeth Sin, is not of GOD, but of the Devil, Ch. iii. 8. And therefore whatever Knowledge such a one may vaunt of Christ, it is evident that he really knows him not. For whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him, ver. 6. Hereby (saith he) i. e. Hereby ONLY we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments. By this we may be assured that we indeed know Christ, and that he does and will know us: We are sure that we have his Spirit to assist us here, Ch. iv. 12, 13. and we are sure that he will receive us to himself hereafter, John xiv. 3.

But that we may fully understand the Words, and duly improve them, I shall explain and discourse of them in the Manner following.

I. FIRST, I shall shew what the Apostle intends by *knowing Christ*.

II. SE

II. SECONDLY, I shall enquire, what ^{SERM.}
Means he directs to, for the *attaining* such ^{VI.}
 Knowledge.

I. FIRST, I must shew what the Apostle intends by *knowing Christ*. For there are various and different Manners of knowing him mentioned in Scripture. There is a Knowledge of him, which even the *Devils* have : *I know thee who thou art* (saith one of them) *the Holy One of GOD*, Luke iv. 34. *Others also came out of many which they had possessed, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of GOD*, ver. 41. But our Saviour rebuked them, and would not suffer them to speak, because *they knew he was Christ*. They knew him not as a Saviour, but as a Judge ; and therefore our Lord would receive none of their Confession, because it proceeded not from Choice but Necessity. Instead of reviving their Hopes, his Appearance amongst them but increased their Despair : They had nothing to expect from him but Indignation and Wrath : And therefore their knowing him could not but throw them into Horror and Confusion.

A dismal Consequence this of knowing him !
 Though the Knowledge, which *Men* that are *wicked* have of *him*, is attended with no bet-

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ter. And therefore *their* Knowledge also is very far different from that intended in my Text : For the Knowledge Saint John speaks of, he mentions as *desirable* : *Hereby* (saith he) *We DO KNOW that we know him* : — He speaks of it, you see, as of a Knowledge, which they were very glad to attain. And with good Reason might he do so, as we shall perceive, if we look back upon the two Verses preceding my Text. *My little Children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not*, i. e. that ye do not, like these Boasters, live in any *Habit* of Sin ; or wilfully commit any one *single Act* of Sin : *But if any Man sin* through Inadvertency or Surprise, or for any Time past has lived in Sin, but now sincerely repents and amends his Life ; *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous* : And he (in such Cases) is the *Propitiation for our Sins* ; and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World : i. e. of all that lay hold on him by Faith and Repentance. And then immediately follows my Text — *And hereby we DO KNOW that we know him*, i. e. we don't vainly and impiously boast, but we ASSUREDLY know that he is an *Advocate* for us, a *Propitiation* for our past Sins, and not only so, but also for our future
Slips

Slips and Failings, provided we be careful, ^{S E R M.}
to the utmost of our Power, to *keep his Com-* ^{VI.}
mandments.

So that to *know Christ*, in the Apostle's Sense, is not only to *know* that Christ is the *Advocate*, and *Propitiation for the Sins of all that repent*; but to know also *assuredly*, that if we persevere in the State we are in, he is *our Advocate*, and *our Propitiation*: that we are of the happy Number of those for whom he prays and intercedes, and of those whom, in Consequence of his Intercession, his Father looks upon as *interested* in him, as *Members* of him, united WITH him, and IN him. And so the Apostle several Times explains himself in this very Epistle: In the Verse next but one to my Text — *Hereby* (saith he) *know we that we are IN him*, ver. 5. And so in the next Chapter — *He that keepeth the Commandments dwelleth IN Christ, and Christ IN him: And hereby we know that he abideth IN us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*, Ch. iii. 24. And so again in the 4th Chapter — *Hereby know we, that we dwell IN him, and he IN us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*, Ch. iv. 13. By the Communication and Influence of which Holy Spirit, we shall farther know that we are

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BORN of him : Which is another Phrase that St. John uses to express this State : *BORN of him*, Ch. ii. 29. *i. e.* of Christ, and *born of GOD* : *Whose Seed*, he assures us, *remaineth* in every one that is so born, to preserve *him from Sin*, Ch. iii. 9. and to be a perpetual Spring and Principle within him, of a new, holy and spiritual Life : Agreeable to what another Apostle saith, *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. *i. e.* A Man who truly believes in Christ, and has his Spirit, renounces all the carnal Deeds of the *old Man*, and lives up to that *new Evangelical Law*, which Christ introduced ; which is the only Test whereby we can *know that we know Christ*, that we are *born of him*, and *abide in him* * : As will appear from my

II. SE-

* The Reverend Mr. *Whitefield* in his Sermon on this Text (viz. 2 Cor. v. 17.) makes it one of his principal Heads, to shew "Why we must be new Creatures *ere* [*i. e.* *before*] we can be in Christ, or in order to be *rightly* in Christ." Whereas it is obvious that St. *Paul* means, that a Man's becoming a *new Creature*, is a *necessary Effect* of his *being in Christ*; and consequently that he must *be in Christ, before* he can be a *new Creature*. If a Man could *new create himself*, or become a *new Creature* by his own Strength, *before* he was *in Christ*; he would be tempted to believe, he had but little need of Christ afterwards. Mr. *Whitefield's* Arguments on this Head could not sure be suggested by the *Holy Ghost*, because the *Holy Ghost* never

II. SECOND Head, under which I am to enquire, what *Means* the Apostle prescribes for the *attaining* such Knowledge. And That my Text expressly tells us, is *Keeping the Commandments*: *Hereby we DO KNOW*, or are sure, *that we know him, IF WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.* SERM.
VI.

But to speak distinctly to this 2d Head, I must subdivide it into two Particulars: And enquire

First, *Who* may be said in the Apostle's Sense, to *keep the Commandments*: And

Secondly, *What Assurance* or *Certainty* the keeping the Commandments will yield, that we are *born of GOD*, that we *know Christ*, that *He is in us*, and *we in HIM*.

First I shall enquire, *Who* may be said to *keep the Commandments*; or what the *keeping his Commandments* implies. Does it mean an *absolute* and *perfect* Obedience, and to *all* his Commands? If so; then are we never the nearer to the Knowledge of Christ as yet. For though a Man *which does those Things*

never suggests any thing that contradicts his own Word. Let Mr. *Whitefield* therefore take heed, what *Spirit* it is of which he boasts he has a *double Portion* given him*, and in the *Demonstration* of which he tells us he speaks†, with such *great Enlargements*, and *irresistible Power*‡.

* Journal III. p. 15. † Ibid. p. 13. ‡ Ibid. p. 24.

shall

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shall live by them, Rom. x. 5. yet *who* is the Man, and *where* is he to be found, that ever thoroughly observed them? *Who can say, I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin?* Prov. xx. 9. This is a Question which the Wise-Man puts in one Place, and he himself answers it in another: *There is not a just Man upon Earth* (saith he) *that doth good, and sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 20. St. James affirms, that *in many things we offend all*, James iii. 2. And therefore, a few Verses before my Text, St. John warns us, that *if we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us*, Ch. i. 8. And again, *if we say, that we have not sinned, we make GOD a Liar, and his Word is not in us*, ver. 10. From all which it follows, that an *absolute* and *perfect* Obedience to God's Laws is not attainable in this Life: But that the best of Men, although they indulge not themselves in any *Habit* of Sin; yet sometimes offend, both in doing what they ought not, and also in omitting to do what they ought. And even the best Actions of the best Man alive have, it is to be feared, some Allay of Infirmities and Imperfections in them.

All

All this is confessedly true : And yet St. *John*, in this very Epistle, as plainly tells us. SERM.
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that *He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil* : But that *whosoever is born of G O D, doth not commit Sin* ; for his Seed [the Seed of God] remaineth in him ; and he cannot sin, because he is born of G O D, Ch. iii. 8, 9. And again, *We know that whosoever is born of G O D sinneth not ; but that he who is begotten of G O D keepeth himself, and that Wicked One toucheth him not*, Ch. v. 18. From all which it follows, on the other Hand, that there is some Measure or Degree of Holiness and Obedience by which the Children of G O D are manifest, as the Apostle speaks, from the Children of the Devil, Ch. iii. 10. And what that Measure or Degree is, is necessary to be shewn.

Now there are three very obvious Qualifications or Requisites with which such Obedience must necessarily be attended : And with which when attended, we may humbly trust, it will amount to that keeping the Commandments of God, which St. *John* means. And to each of these I shall speak as briefly as I can.

In the first Place it must be sincere, proceeding from the Heart. For this is necessary, even to the satisfying our selves, that our Ob-
servance

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servance of God's Commands proceeds from a lively *Faith in God, and Love to him.* For *human Laws, or our own Security, our Character or Reputation, or perhaps our natural Tempers and Inclinations,* may all, or either of them, frequently restrain our *outward Actions,* or prompt us to the exerting of some *outward Behaviour,* from which *Men* may think us honest and just : But a *Man* that acts only from such Influences, and keeps God's Commandments from such Motives, by no means *keeps them* in the Sense of the Text. The *keeping the Commandments* which the Apostle means, is that on which the Psalmist pronounces a Blessing : *Blessed are they that keep his Testimonies, and seek him with their whole Heart,* Ps. cxix. 2. For if this be not the Case ; if the *Heart* suggest not the Virtue we pretend ; or if it be not weaned from the Vice we forbear ; we are but Deceivers of ourselves, and Liars to God. An Action we must *abstain from,* we must also *abhor* : what we ought not to *do,* we ought to *loath.* Since if our *Mind* hankers, where our *Hands* are withheld ; we are but like a *Lion* chained, which, though tied up from doing Mischief, retains his *Lionish Disposition* still.

And

And as thus our Obedience must be sincere as to its *Principle*; so in the next Place must it be *regular* and *constant* in its *Practice*. For good Actions, exerted only now and then, by Fits and Starts, are no Signs of a true Obedience, which must be *settled* and *resolved*. It cannot indeed be expected that, whilst we are in this State of human Weakness or Frailty, our Obedience should never be interrupted, that it should always go on evenly and smoothly, without any Fault: This I doubt is incompatible with our unglorified State. But still so much is expected of a Christian, as that he should not only abstain from living in the *Habit* of any Sin, but also from *wilfully* committing any *single Act* of Sin. For so much at least must be intended by the Apostle, when he tells us that *Whosoever is born of GOD, does not commit Sin, and cannot sin*, Ch. iii. 8, 9. This certainly must mean that a Man that is *regenerate*, hath such an inward Frame of Heart, such a Disposition of Soul, as renders any *single Act* of Sin exceedingly odious and hateful to him. Inasmuch that if at any time he slips through Surprise, or Want of Attention, he immediately recollects and condemns himself for it: And recovering his Fall, he more
atten-

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attentively watches his Steps for the future :
 But being still apprized of his own Weakness,
 he makes it a constant Petition in his Prayers,
 that when through Frailty he forgets God,
 God would in Mercy remember him : That
 as he often falls by the evil Inclination of his
 own Nature, he may always speedily rise
 again by the Help of his Grace.

But thirdly ; As the *keeping the Command-
 ments*, which the Text intends must be sin-
 cere and constant ; so must it be *universal* al-
 so : *i. e.* One Commandment must be kept
 as well as another, and all of them as strict-
 ly and religiously as one. For St. James tells
 us, that *whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and
 yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all*, James
 ii. 10. For as the *Man* is hurt, when only
 one Member of him is bruised or wounded ;
 so by breaking of one Link of that Chain of
 Duties of which Religion consists, the Law is
 violated. And therefore a Person that *so*
 offends is guilty of the Breach of the Law
 in general, notwithstanding he should observe
 all the rest. For the Law is one universal
 Body, one perfect Rule of Righteousness :
 And one and the same Law-Giver is the
 Author of it all : Whose Authority conse-
 quently is infringed by the Breach of any
 one

one Part as well as of another. For he that ^{S E R M.} said, Do not commit Adultery, said also, Do ^{VI.} not kill: Now if thou commit no Adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a Transgressor of the Law.

Nor must we content ourselves with an uniform, universal Observance of his *moral* Precepts only; but must regularly and duly obey his *positive* Institutions also. For whatever Delight some Men may take in comparing *positive* and *moral* Duties together, and in shewing how much one is preferable to the other, although both be required, and one as a necessary Means to the other; yet I am sure that, so long as *Disobedience* is itself an *Immorality*, they will find it a very difficult Task to prove any Man *moral*, that *disobeys* the *positive* Commands of his Maker.

But farther still: Not only the Observance of Christ's *standing* Laws, but also a Compliance with his *extraordinary* Will, a patient Submission to all manner of *Trials*, whenever he shall please to call us to them, must be included in what St. *John* means by *keeping his Commandments*. The young Man in the Gospel, Mark x. 17—22. had kept so many of the *Ten* Commandments from his Youth, that Jesus is said, *when he beheld him,*

210 *St. John's Test of knowing Christ,*

S E R M. VI. *to have loved him : And yet the Lack of one thing, the not selling what he had and giving it to the Poor, the not taking up his Cross and following our Lord, when He commanded, but prizing his Riches more than Christ, kept him from being Christ's Disciple. It is true, such a Self-Denial, and total Resignation of all a Man has, is not a Duty ordinarily incumbent upon every Christian : But every Man, who, when called to it, refuses it, is not a Christian. For unless a Man, in the Course of his Obedience, gains such an Ascendant over his Passions, as to be ready, whenever Occasion calls, to part with every thing for Christ's sake, he is none of Christ's, Mat. x. 37, 38. Luke xiv. 26, 27. He himself has given us to understand, that unless we be resolute enough to forego every Relation and Blessing of this World, that thwarts or interferes with his Precepts and Commands ; unless we can willingly and chearfully submit to any Crosses or Interruptions to our worldly Felicity ; unless for his sake we can postpone and renounce the nearest and dearest Relations in Life ; yea, and lay down our own Lives also for his Honour and Glory ; we are not to flatter ourselves that we are his Disciples ; for such he will never acknowledge us to be,*

Thus

and being born of him.

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Thus qualified, therefore, must be that ^{SERM.} keeping God's Commandments which is intend- ^{VI.}
ed in my Text: Which I chose to set forth
in its full Amplitude, that you may neither on
the one Hand deceive yourselves, by resting
contented with an insufficient, imperfect Obe-
dience; nor on the other Hand despond,
when you have done ALL that your Duty re-
quires you to do. To guard you more espe-
cially against the last of which Mistakes, I
shall now proceed to enquire,

Secondly, What Assurance or Certainty the
keeping God's Commandments yields, that
we are born of GOD, that we know Christ,
that HE IS IN US, and WE IN HIM. To
introduce me to this Particular, let me read a
few Verses of our Apostle again: In the first
Chapter he tells us, that *if we walk in the
Light, as he is in the Light, we have Fellow-
ship one with another*, Ch. i. 7. (i. e. GOD
with us, and we with GOD,) and the Blood of
Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all Sin.
Compare ver. 3. In my Text, *Hereby* (saith
he) *we do know, that we know him, if we
keep his Commandments*: And in a Verse or
two after, *Whoso keepeth his Word, in him
verily is the Love of GOD perfected: Hereby
know we, that we are in him*, Ch. ii. 5.

P 2

And

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VI.

And in the last Verse of this same Chapter, *If ye know, that he is righteous, ye know, that every one that doth Righteousness, is born of him,* ver. 29. In the 3d Chapter, again, *Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards GOD: And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his Commandments, and do those Things, that are pleasing in his Sight,* Ch. iii. 21, 22. And lastly, in the 4th Chapter, *If we love one another, (saith he, which he represents as the Summit of Christianity) GOD DWELLETH in us, and his Love is PERFECTED in us,* Ch. iv. 12.

Now, although it is confessed that the main Intention of the Apostle, in writing this Epistle, was to condemn the vain and impious Pretensions of the *Nicolaitans* and others to *any* Knowledge of Christ; yet, what Words could have made it plainer, that St. *John* at the same Time allowed and asserted, that they who *walk in the Light*, who *keep his Word and Commandments*, who *do Righteousness*, and from thence have the Testimony of a *good Conscience*; that these, I say, have an *infallible Sign*, that they *know Christ*, that they are *cleansed from their Sin*, that they are *born of GOD*, that they *have Fellowship with GOD*, that they *do those*

I

Things

and being born of him.

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Things which are pleasing to GOD, that *the* ^{SERM.}
Love of GOD is perfected in them, that He ^{VI.}
dwelleth in THEM, and THER in HIM? They,
therefore, who are conscious to themselves,
that they have *this* Test of their *knowing*
Christ, and of their being *born of him*, which
you see that same Apostle, who *explains* these
Privileges, and who sets himself to oppose all
false Claims to them, admits, and pronounces
the *only true one*; — What farther Satis-
faction would they have or desire, that the
Spirit of GOD dwells in their Hearts; and
that it is the Motion of that Spirit, which en-
livens and quickens their Hearts and Wills to
GOD's Service, and a holy Conversation? *He*
that keepeth the Commandments, dwelleth in
Christ, and Christ in him. And hereby we
know, that he abideth in us, by the Spirit
which he hath given us, Ch. iii. 24. For
whenever we find ourselves *inclined* to do,
whatever we learn GOD *wills* us to do; we
may conclude, it is the same Spirit, which
commands, that inclines: And if so, we know
again, that *as many as are led by the Spirit*
of GOD, they are the Sons of GOD: The
Spirit itself beareth Witness with our Spirit,
that we are the Children of GOD: And if
Children, then Heirs, Heirs of GOD, and joint
Heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 14, 16, 17.

But this I speak wholly upon Presumption,
 that we stedfastly *persevere* in our Obedience:

For otherwise *Obedience*, or a long *Habit* of Obedience, gives us no Security of Salvation. So long as a Man obeys, and leads a good Life; so long, be sure, is he in a State of Salvation: *i. e.* he is assured, that if he continues to live as at present he does, and dies in the State he is at present in, he shall be finally saved. But let his Faith be ever so strong now, and his Practice ever so sincere and uniform; yet no one *should* be, because no one *can* be, certain and secure, that he shall hold the same Faith, or continue the same Practice to his dying Day *.

For with whatever Assurance some Teachers may tell you, that a Man, who (in *their* Language) has once *had a Call*, can never afterwards *fall from Grace*; That is a Doctrine which I dare not preach, because I could never find it in my Bible. From thence, I think, I learn on the contrary, that, although by the best Use of Grace a Man can make, he can't possibly *merit* a Continuance of it to him; yet by the least Slight or Neglect of

* See Bishop Andrews's *Censura Censuræ*, &c. in the Appendix to *Ellis* on the 39 Articles, p. 44—54. and *Plaifer's* Appeal to the Gospel, part 3. c. 18. p. 153—157.

improving it, GOD may be provoked to with-
draw it from him. And, if *that* be the Case, SERM.
VI.
instead of *receiving a full Reward*, 2 John
8. their CALLED Man loses (as St. John
speaks) *the Things that he has wrought, and
so labours in vain*. For, when the Righteous
turneth away from his Righteousness, and
committeth Iniquity, and doth according to all
the Abominations which the wicked Man doth;
shall he live? No: All the Righteousness that
he hath done shall not be mentioned: In his
Trespas that he hath trespassed, and in his Sin
that he hath sinned, in them shall he die,
Ezek. xviii. 24. To be made Partakers of
Christ, we must hold the Beginning of our
Confidence stedfast unto the End, Heb. iii. 14.
And, even in the severest Trials and Perse-
cutions, our Lord himself tells us, that He
only that shall endure unto the End, shall be
saved, Matt. xxiv. 13. Therefore is He
that thinketh he standeth advised by St. Paul
to take heed lest he fall, 1 Cor. x. 12. and
they that have always, or hitherto, obeyed,
still to work out their own Salvation with
Fear and Trembling, Phil. ii. 12.

The Result then of the Whole is this: So
long as a Man keeps the Commandments of
GOD sincerely, constantly, wholly, and in

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VI.

every Respect that I have mentioned; (always disclaiming any Merits in *himself*, and relying entirely on the Merits of his Saviour) so long is he sure, that he hath a lively, saving Knowledge of Christ: He is *sealed by the Spirit, the Earnest of which GOD hath given in his Heart*, Ephes. iv. 30. 2 Cor. i. 22. Which if he cherishes, and continues to go on as at present he does, nothing remains but to die in Peace and enter into Glory.

And, now, many and excellent are the Inferences that might be drawn from the Doctrine I have advanced. And, in the *first* Place, be sure, it ought to be applied against the *Nicolaitans* of every Age: Men who, pretending to be the *Favourites* of GOD, his *Chosen* and *Elect*, and to know the *Secrets* of the Divine Will, and to be privy to all his *hidden Decrees*; put on, indeed, a *Form of Godliness*, as to outward Shew; but within, are full of Deceit and Uncleaness, which, like their Predecessors of old, they exert in the Practice of all Lewdness and Vice, and then are sure, GOD can see no Spots in his Saints. Against these (if any such there *now* be) we might thunder, from the several Texts I had Occasion to read in the opening
of

of my Discourse: I might shew them to
 themselves, and upon the Authority of St. SERM.
VI.
John, boldly pronounce, *Whence they are,*
 and *What they be.* *He that committeth Sin,*
(saith the Apostle) is of the Devil, chap. iii.
 8. And, *he that saith I know him, and*
keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and
the Truth is not in him, chap. ii. 4.

But this, however necessary as well as obvious Use, must be waved at present, in order to make Way for one of a very contrary Nature. Posterity, sure, will think, that we lived in a very pious Age, when they shall read, that our Preachers found a Time when they were forced to *restrain the religious Heats* of their People, and *call to Order* their Christian Zeal. And yet it will not be an *unseasonable* Application of my Text, at present, if I take Occasion to exhort all, who have that Test of their *knowing Christ*, which St. *John* here requires, to rest *easy* and *contented* with it: And not to be troubled for the Want of those high Raptures and *Feelings* of Joy, of those extraordinary Manifestations of God to them, which some modern Enthusiasts pretend that the Regenerate amongst them experience, to the great Disheartning of many good Christians, to the
Puffing

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Puffing up of many *vain* ones *, to the Disparagement of the Doctrine of *Divine Grace*, and to the Disturbance of the *public Order* and *Peace* of the Church. For to what Use, I beseech you, would such Ecstasies serve? Suppose a Man should, for once, hear a *Voice from Heaven*, or see a *Vision from*

* Mr. *Whitefield* tells us, that “ He learned the Nature of “ *true Christianity*, and the *Necessity of the New-Birth*, from a “ Book entitled, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, [which “ Book contains at the End of it, a short *Account of a spiritual “ Life*,] a Book, he says †, *worth it's Weight in Gold*.” And, indeed, if here and there it be read with Caution, it cannot well be over-valued: The following Passage, I am sure, cannot be considered too often, or too attentively, by Mr. *Whitefield* himself. Let me therefore recommend it to him. “ As “ all, who follow a spiritual Life, must be well instructed in “ the Nature and Measure of—*affectionate Sufferings*; so they “ are no less to consider well, the *Joys and Comforts* they find “ springing up in their Souls. This is as important a Caution, as any in the whole Course of a spiritual Life: For some “ coming to feel many of these *inward Visits*, as they think “ them, from thence judge, they have made great Advances “ in their Way to God; and at length, come to swell hugely “ in their own Conceits, imagining themselves Men of *seraphical Devotion*: This carries them to contempt, and separate “ from, others, whom they imagine less holy; nay, and will “ lead them to imagine, that they have strange *new Lights* “ communicated to them from the *Father of Lights*; and every Conceit they take up, when in these Heats of Temper, “ they imagine to be of God, and give it out as such to others ‡.”

† See Mr. *Whitefield's* Account of himself, in the *Weekly Miscellany* for May 12, 1739.

‡ Bishop *Burnet's* Edition, 8vo, 1707, p. 115, 116.

thence,

thence, certifying him how much he was in SERM.
VI. Favour with God; yet still, methinks, it would be more desirable to have always an Assurance of the same from within, arising from the Bottom of one's own Breast, in the real and internal Impressions we feel of a Godlike Nature on our own Souls: It would be much more desirable, I say, to see and observe, that our own Will is crucified, our carnal and animal Life subdued, and that a Divine Life is risen up in it's Stead: For this is not only a *sure Pledge*, but is itself the *Beginning* of Happiness and Heaven; the very Essence of which consists in a perfect Conformity of all the Powers of our Souls, with the Will of God.

Do not, therefore, (as a great Ornament of our Church speaks *, alluding to what St. Paul says concerning *the Righteousness of Faith*;) "Do not (says he) seek after an Oracle, or immediate Revelation, or expect that a Voice from Heaven should assure thee, that thou art a true Believer, and a

* Bishop Bull's Discourse on the Testimony of the Spirit of God in the Faithful, in his *English Works*, vol. iii. p. 883, 884. I would heartily recommend the Perusal of that whole Discourse to my Reader, in which he will find the chief Doctrines of our present *Methodists* obviated, and very handsomely exposed.

" sincere

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“ sincere Penitent, art in a State of Grace
 “ and Favour with GOD; for the Resoluti-
 “ on of the Case is *nigh unto thee*, and even
 “ *within thee*, and to be sought after no fur-
 “ ther, than in thine own Heart and Con-
 “ science. If thou perceivest, that thou
 “ dost believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, with
 “ all thine Heart, with a Faith working by
 “ Love, Love to GOD, and Love to thy
 “ Neighbour; thou mayest as certainly con-
 “ clude, thou art in a State of Salvation, as
 “ if a Voice from Heaven had told thee so.”

We deny not, but grant, that the Spirit of GOD may sometimes, as he sees there is Occasion, strike the Minds of good Christians with a sudden Joy, enlightning their Understandings, dispelling their Clouds, enlivening their Affections, and enabling them to *discern* the Graces of GOD shining in their Brightness, and acting vigorously on their Souls. But these are Operations, which are only transient and occasional, neither vouchsafed, nor needful to *all* Men, nor to *any* Man at *all* Times.

On the contrary, we often meet with Christians of *great Piety*, though at the same Time of *great Diffidence*, that have the *Fruits* of the Spirit flourishing in them, but yet

yet have *no Satisfaction* from them, because SERM.
VI. they do not *sensibly feel* and *discern* the Holy Spirit itself operating on their Minds *. And what would our new Apostles have us say to such Men? Would they have us tell them, that if they *feel not* the Spirit, it is a plain Sign they are *deserted* of it; and so throw them into Despair? Far be it from us! As to myself, I must own, should I meet with such a Christian, I would endeavour to encourage him: I would remind him, that the Sun, when it is risen upon the Earth, does not always shine out in it's full Brightness; but is sometimes overcast with Clouds, and hidden from our Sight: But even then, it affords us so much Light, as that we may chearfully perform the Works of the Day. And just so I would tell him, that the Spirit of God may be within him, and yet he himself not always be affected with *Liveliness* and *Joy*: He may sometimes, very probably, be overcast with Fears and Mistrusts: and yet still it will enable him to distinguish himself from the Children of Darkness, and manifest him, by his Works, to be a Child of Light. The *not feeling* the Spirit therefore, should render no Man disconsolate, so long as

* See Bishop Bull, as before, p. 893—896.

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he produces *the Fruits of the Spirit*, which no Man can do, who has not the Spirit dwelling in him. For a *corrupt Tree* can no more bring forth *good Fruit*, than a *good Tree* can bring forth *corrupt Fruit*, Luke vi. 43.

Let me, then, exhort you, not to be dismayed, nor to heed them, if any rapturous Enthusiasts preach up, I know not what unaccountable Sensation, violent Emotion, and sudden Change, which a Man must *feel*, when he becomes regenerate, or is first adopted for a Child of God *. For such sensible Emotions, a Man, who was regenerated by Baptism in his Infancy, and was religiously brought up, and has led a regular Christian Life from his Cradle, will very probably never experience. A Man, indeed, that is *reclaimed* from a *bad* Life, and seriously and resolutely enters upon a *new* one, may, very likely, at first, perceive some Transports of

* There is a very good Admonition to this Purpose, in Mr. Whitefield's fore-cited golden Book. "None are to measure their first Regeneration, either by the Vehemence, or by the Continuance of their Sorrow, but by the Effects it produceth. If it makes them hate Sin, so as most carefully to guard against it; if it makes them hate themselves, so as to become denied to all Self-Pleasure and Self-Will, and resigned to the Will of God; they are not to be scrupulous about any Thing further, but to examine these carefully †."

† Bishop Burnet's Edition, 8vo, 1707, p. 113.

Joy

Joy for his *happy* Change: But to a Man uniformly religious, and devout from his Childhood, the Spirit speaks, as the Lord did to *Elijah*, neither in *strong Winds*, nor in *Earthquakes*, nor in *Fire*, but in a *still, small Voice*, 1 Kings xix. 11, 12. SERM.
VI.

As to the Broachers of these Doctrines, should any bear them Record, that they *have a Zeal of GOD*, Rom. x. 2. I would not set myself to contest it with them: But we have abundant Reason to think, it is *not according to Knowledge*. For whatever Assurances they may have *within* them, to satisfy *themselves*, that they are *born of GOD*, and *speak*, and *act by the Holy Spirit*; it is apparent, that they give but very indifferent *outward* Proofs to convince *others*, that *GOD is in them of a Truth*. For the representing the ACTS of one only amongst them, as of greater Lustre than the *Acts* of all the *Apostles* together; the assuming to themselves, upon all Occasions, the peculiar *Language of the Holy Ghost*; the equalling themselves in every Thing they do, and in every trivial Civility done to them, to *Prophets* and *Apostles*; the boasting of *immediate Inspirations*, and *extraordinary Communications* with *GOD*, and in Proof of it, laying a blasphemous Claim to
greater

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VI.

greater Miracles than ever were performed by our Blessed Saviour *himself* *; the breaking by Force into *other Men's Lines*, 2 Cor. x. 16. there inviting and gathering tumultuous Assemblies, turning *Accusers of their Brethren*, and dissuading their People from attending to the Instructions of those, whom the sacred Writers bid them *to obey, those who have regularly the Rule over them, those who watch for their Souls, as they that must give*

* Any one that has read Mr. *Whitefield's Journals*, will want no Proofs of what I have here charged upon him. But because any one, who has *not* read them, may be apt to think I aggravate in what I say concerning his Pretension to Miracles, I shall here cite some of his own Words, out of the last *Continuation of his Journal*. "They desire to know (says he) by what Authority we preach; and ask, *What Sign shewest thou, that thou dost these Things?* But, alas! what further Sign would they require? We went not into the Fields, till we were excluded the Churches: And has not God set his Seal to our Ministry in an extraordinary Manner? Have not many, that were spiritually blind, received their Sight? Many that have been lame, strengthened to run the Way of God's Commandments? Have not the Deaf heard? The Lepers been cleansed? The Dead raised? And the Poor had the Gospel preached unto them? ¶ That these NOTABLE MIRACLES have been wrought, not in our own Names, or by our own Power, but in the Name and by the Power of Jesus of Nazareth, cannot be denied. And yet they require a Sign? But verily there shall no other Sign be given to this evil and adulterous Generation †." Again in his Letter to

† Journal IV. p. 10, 11.

give Account of them to GOD, Heb. xiii. 17. SERM.
VI.
All these Things seem rather to shew, that }
they

to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, — Saith the Dr. [Dr. Stebbing.]
“ These Men have no *Proof* to offer for *their* inward Manifesta-
“ tions ! ” What Proof, my Lord, does the Dr. require ? Would
“ he have us raise dead Bodies ? Have we not done greater
“ Things than these ? I speak with all Humility : Has not
“ GOD, by our Ministry, raised many dead Souls to a spiritual
“ Life ? — Verily, if Men will not believe the Evidence GOD
“ has given that he sent us ; *neither would they believe, though*
“ *one rose from the Dead ** ” — Was there ever such a Medley
of Vanity, and Nonsense, and Blasphemy jumbled together ?
Dr. Stebbing had observed that the Apostles wrought *Miracles*,
as an *Evidence*, that what they spake, they spake from GOD :
Whereas “ these Men (saith he, meaning the *Methodists*;) have
“ no *Proof* to offer for *their* inward Manifestations, unless their
“ own confident Assertions may be admitted as such †.”
And in answer to this, Mr. Whitefield appeals to his *raising dead*
Souls to a spiritual Life, which he tells you is a *greater* Miracle
than the *raising dead Bodies to a natural Life*. But did our Sa-
viour or his Apostles (when they were called upon for their
Credential-) ever appeal to the inward Effects, they wrought
upon Mens Souls by their *spiritual Cures* ? No : But, saith our
Saviour, — *I have greater Witness than that of John : The*
Works which the Father has given me to finish ; the same Works
that I do, bear Witness of me, that my Father hath sent me, John
v. 36. *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not : But*
if I do ; though ye believe not me, believe the Works ; that ye
may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him,
Ch. x. 37, 38. St. Peter, we know, by preaching one Sermon,
converted about three thousand Souls to the Church, Acts ii. 41.
But we no where find that he called this a *notable Miracle*.
Miracles are Appeals to our outward Senses : Things beyond
the

* Journal IV. p. 19.

† Caution against Religious Delusion, p. 10.

they themselves are not aware what Manner
of Spirit it is, that they are of, Luke ix. 55.

It is not the Spirit of GOD, for certain : For
GOD is not the Author of Confusion (or as the
Margin has it, of Tumult or Unquietness,)
but the GOD of Peace, as in all Churches of
the Saints, 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

But whatever Distaste they may endeavour to give you, with Relation to your true and proper Guides ; let them not by any

the Power of ordinary Nature, done openly in the Sight of the World. Let Mr. Whitefield do any Thing of this Kind, and we will listen to and attend him. But, whilst he imagines that, all that come to gaze at him, go away his Disciples, his *Vanity* will surprize us more than his *Works*. I shall, however, transcribe another Paragraph from his favourite Author, for his Perusal and Meditation.

" All this gives no Warrant for Men, upon the Pretence of
" Inspirations, to make void the Laws of God and Men at
" their Pleasure. For if all Men must be left to this their pretended Freedom, and be permitted to act accordingly ; every
" bold Impostor, or hot-brained Enthusiast, may vouch God,
" and then do what he will. When we are carried to do any
" Thing, which is beyond the common Duties of Mankind,
" and extraordinary ; then we are not to go upon an inward
" Motion of the Spirit. For no other Body is bound to believe or acknowledge it : And therefore, though the inward
" Leadings of the Spirit may satisfy *ourselves*, because perceived by *us* ; yet, before we propose these to *others*, we must
" have some other Arguments to make them good by : No body being bound to receive these, barely upon our own Assertion *."

Means

Means put you out of Conceit with your- SERM.
VI.
selves. But whenever they tell you, that
“ a Man who constantly attends on the Means
“ of Grace, who is exact in his Morals, hu-
“ mane and courteous in his Conversation,
“ who gives much in Alms, and is frequent
“ in private Duties ; that such a Man can be
“ as destitute of any saving experimental
“ Knowledge of Jesus Christ, as those upon
“ whom his Name was never called, and who
“ still sit in Darkness and the Shadow of
“ Death ;” and this only, because he has not
that fanciful Experience of the New-Birth,
which they themselves can neither explain
nor understand ; whenever, I say, they preach
or publish any Thing like this * ; I beseech
you,

* See Mr. *Whitefield*, Journal III. p. 81, 82. Mr. *Whitefield*
(to vindicate the Passage here cited from his third Journal)
writes to the Lord Bishop of *Gloucester*, as follows. “ He
“ [Dr. *Stebbing*,] says— I suppose Mr. *Benjamin Seward* to
“ be a Person *believing in Christ, and blameless in his Conversa-*
“ *tion*, before what I call his Conversion.— But this is a direct
“ Untruth.—For it was through the Want of a *living Faith in*
“ *Jesus Christ*, which he now has, that he was not a Christian
“ before, but a mere Moralist. Your Lordship knows that our
“ Article says, ‘ Works done without the Spirit of God, and
“ true Faith in Jesus Christ, have the Nature of Sin.’ And
“ such were all the Works done by Mr. *Benjamin Seward*, be-
“ fore the Time mentioned in my Journal †.” But if Mr.
Seward

† Journal IV. p. 19.

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VI.

you, my Brethren, mind them not : But turn again to *St. John*, a much greater Divine, and take his Word before them all. His Instruction is this, and with it I shall conclude, *Little Children*, (saith he) *Let no Man deceive you : He that doth Righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous,* 1 John iii. 7. And—*If ye know that he is righteous ; ye know, that every one that doth Righteousness, is BORN OF HIM,* Chap. iii. 29.

Seward had no Faith in Christ; what induced him to attend so constantly on the Means of Grace? And if his Faith was not a living one, how came it to be productive of such Exactness in his Morals; such Humanity and Courteousness in his Conversation, such Liberality in Alms-giving, and such a frequent Performance of private Duties, as Mr. *Whitefield* witnesses of him? If Mr. *Whitefield's* own Report of Mr. *Seward* be a true one; I will venture to affirm, that he was in a much safer Way, before he became acquainted with Mr. *Whitefield*, than he was afterwards; and that he was not so properly converted, as perverted, to Methodism.

SERMON

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S E R M O N VII.

Confirmation necessary to perfect one
Sacrament, and not rendered un-
necessary by the other.

ACTS viii. 14—17.

*When the Apostles which were at Jerusalem,
heard that Samaria had received the Word of
GOD, they sent unto them Peter and John.*

*Who when they were come down, prayed for
them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.*

*(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them :
Only they were baptized in the Name of the
Lord Jesus :)*

*Then laid they their Hands on them, and they
received the Holy Ghost.*

THAT I may treat of this Passage of ^{S E R M.}
Scripture in as clear a Method as I am ^{VII.}
able, I will range what I have to say in the
Order following, viz.

SERM.
VII.I. FIRST, I will enquire into the *Original* of Confirmation.

II. SECONDLY, I will shew that the *extraordinary Powers*, with which Confirmation was at first attended, is no Argument that it was only designed for a *temporary Ordinance*.

III. THIRDLY, I shall prove that the Apostles administer'd it not so much for the sake of its *extraordinary*, as of its *ordinary Effects*; that they designed it for a *standing* and *perpetual Ordinance*, and that accordingly it was continued through all Ages of the Church, even after the miraculous *Effects* of it ceased.

IV. FOURTHLY, I shall examine what are the *standing Benefits* of it, and to what *End* and *Purpose* it is now administer'd.

V. FIFTHLY, I shall enquire, who are the proper *Candidates* for it, or who the *Persons* are that ought to receive it.

VI. SIXTHLY, I shall shew who are the *Ministers* of it, or whose Office it is to perform it.

VII. SEVENTHLY, I shall explain the *Form* and *Ceremony* with which it is performed. And then

VIII. LASTLY,

VIII. LASTLY, I shall conclude with a ^{SERM.}
proper *Exhortation* to all that are concerned ^{VII.}
to offer themselves for it, with some short
Instructions how they are to *prepare* and *qualify*
themselves for it, in what Manner they
are to *receive* it, and to *behave themselves af-*
terwards.

And in all these Particulars my Text will
afford us Light sufficient, and lead us to take
Notice of every thing that is observable;
though I shall have no Occasion to explain it
any otherwise than as I go along.

To begin then, I am to enquire and ex-
amine in the

I. FIRST Place into the *Original* and *In-*
stitution of this Holy Rite. And if we con-
sider it as a Rite wherein Persons baptized in
their Infancy, take their Baptismal Engagement
upon themselves so soon as they are arrived
at Years of Discretion; or so soon as they are
duly catechised or instructed in the solemn
Promise which their Godfathers or Sureties
then made for them; we may then very safe-
ly deduce the Practice of it from a very an-
cient and religious Custom among the *Jews*:
Who were above all Things careful (as indeed
they are still) to see their Children early and
thoroughly

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thoroughly instructed in the Jewish or Mo-
saick Law *. To this end they had in every
Village a Person called *the Instructor of Babes*
(to whom St. Paul Rom. ii. 20. seems to allude)
whose Business it was to teach Children the
written Law, till they were ten Years of Age ;
and from that Time till they were fifteen, to
instruct them in the Talmud, or Oral Tradi-
tions †. At the Age of thirteen, they were
brought to the House of God, to be publicly
examined, and if they were approved, were
then declared to be *Children of the Precept* ‡ :
i. e. They were thenceforth obliged to keep
the Law, and were accounted answerable for
their own Sins ||. And whereas our Saviour
submitted himself to this Examination, when
he was but twelve Years old (for that is sup-
posed to have been the End of his staying be-
hind at *Jerusalem*, and offering himself to
the Doctors in the Temple) it was by Reason
of his extraordinary Qualifications and En-
dowments, which to speak in the Language
used by the Jews, *ran before the Command* **.
And from this Custom among the Jews, the

* Joseph. Antiq. l. iv. c. 8. And Buxtorf. Synagog.
Judaic. c. 7. † ‡ || Buxtorf. ibid. ** Grotius in Luc.
ii. 42.

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is thought by some to be deduced.

But now here I must premise, what I shall shew more distinctly by and by, that besides the Engagement, of the Party confirmed, to take the Baptismal Vow upon himself; in the Rite of Confirmation, as it is used by Christians, we suppose that the Graces of the Holy Ghost are communicated at the same Time, by the Imposition of the Hands of the Bishop, to enable the Person, on whom he imposes them, to keep this Vow. And this we derive from the *Institution* as well as from the *Practice* of the Apostles. And an Institution of the Apostles, whilst they were under the visible Direction and Guidance of the Holy Ghost, may justly be called a *Divine Institution*. And that the Rite of Confirmation (as it is used in our own Church) was so instituted, I shall take upon me in this Discourse to shew.

In doing this I shall proceed as regularly and as easily as I can, and will infer no more from any Text, but what it obviously implies: I shall begin with that which is already before us, which informs us that, *when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of GOD,* (and had
been

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been baptized, as the twelfth and sixteenth Verses relate) *they sent unto them*, two of their own Number, *Peter* and *John*, to the End that by the Imposition of their Hands and Prayers, *the Samaritans might receive the Holy Ghost*. Now from hence we learn that the Holy Ghost was wanting to the *Samaritans* even after they were baptized: Consequently that neither could Baptism alone, though administer'd *in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, ver. 16. as this was, confer him on the *Samaritans* in such Degree as they needed him; nor yet could the Person that administer'd it to them (though an Evangelist, though a Worker of Miracles, though plentifully endued with the Holy Ghost himself) by any additional Administration of his, communicate the Holy Ghost to others. Because, if the Holy Ghost were a Consequence of Baptism simply considered, or without a subsequent Imposition of Hands; or if *Philip* had had any Power to communicate him, by the Imposition of his own Hands; two Apostles would not have been sent from *Jerusalem* to pray for and lay their Hands upon them. Thus far we are full and clear: And the same may be argued from another Occurrence recorded also in the Acts of the Apostles, and which

which happened to the *Ephesians*, Acts xix. 5, 6. upon whom, after they had been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle St. Paul laid his Hands: And then the Holy Ghost came on them: Which shews again that the Apostle's laying on his Hands, as well as his Baptizing them, was necessary to perfect and confirm the *Ephesians* with the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghost. SERM.
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Now from these two Instances it plainly appears that the Imposition of Hands for conferring or communicating the Holy Ghost was of *Apostolical Practice* and *Appointment* both: Practised by Peter and John and Paul; and by the two former by the *Appointment* of the other Apostles at Jerusalem. But because it often happened that the laying on of the Hands of the Apostles was attended with extraordinary and miraculous Gifts, which is intimated in the Verses following my Text, Acts viii. 18, 19. but more clearly expressed in the Instance of the *Ephesians* which I mentioned last, and of whom it is particularly related, that they *spoke with Tongues and prophesied*, Acts xix. 6. as soon as Paul had laid his Hands upon them; because, I say, this laying on of Hands was originally attended with such mighty Effects; and because no such Effects attend

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attend the performing the same Rite now; therefore many are apt to infer that the Ministration was designed to be only a temporary one, whilst the Power of working Miracles was continued to the Church, and consequently that the one ought to have ceased long ago with the other. To remove this Objection therefore out of the Way, I shall now proceed to my

II. SECOND Head, under which I am to shew that the *extraordinary Powers*, with which Confirmation was at first attended, is no Argument that it was designed to be only a *temporary Institution*. In order to this let me observe to you, that every Ministration, though allowed to be an *ordinary* and *perpetual* Ministration, was at first attended with *extraordinary Effects* and *miraculous Powers*. Even *preaching* once was thus attended: For *Peter* preached but one Sermon, *Acts* iii. 41. and he immediately converted three thousand Souls: He preached again, and added but one Miracle, *Ch.* iv. 4. and no less than five thousand were added to the Church. Again, Persons, we know, were miraculously cured in the *Visitation of the Sick*, who were often saved, and raised up by the Lord, through the Prayer

Prayer of Faith, James v. 14, 15. The Sa-
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maritans in my Text had *unclean Spirits* cast
 out of them, Acts viii. 7. and were also healed
 of *Palsies* and *Lameness*, when *Philip* preach-
 ed to them, and converted them to the Faith.
Saul himself was cured of a judicial *Blindness*
 at his *Baptism*, Ch. ix. 17, 18. And *Æneas*
 was healed by *Peter* of a *Palsie*, Ch. ix. 33,
 34, 35. at the same Time probably that he
 was cured of his *Infidelity*. And yet because
 no such Powers follow these several Ordi-
 nances now, will any one infer that *preach-*
ing Sermons, *visiting the Sick*, *converting* and
baptizing People into the Faith, were only
 designed for temporary Ordinances? If not;
 then, to fancy that *the Invocation of the Holy*
Ghost with the laying on of Hands was to cease,
 when the extraordinary Effects of that Ordi-
 nance failed; is too groundless a Supposition,
 when put in the Balance against an Institu-
 tion that has so many Texts of Scripture to
 support it.

In the Infancy of the Church these *visible*
 Effects of the Spirit's descending upon those
 that believed, were necessary to bring over
 others to the Faith: And therefore the Ef-
 fusion of the Spirit of God perfectly ran over:
 But when whole Nations turned Christian,
 then the Occasion for Miracles ceased.

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And for this Reason the Holy Ghost does not now, in Nations already converted to the Faith, impower us to work them. But the *ordinary* Gifts and Graces, which are useful and necessary to compleat a Christian, are still as much the Fruits and Effects of this Holy Rite, as ever they were. And these are by much the most valuable Benefits: To cast out the Devil of Lust, or to throw down the Pride of Lucifer; to beat down Satan under our Feet, or to triumph over our spiritual Enemies; to cure a diseased Soul; to keep unharmed from the Assaults of a Temptation, and untainted from the Infection of an ill Example; This is much more advantageous and beneficial to us, than the Power of working the greatest Miracle.

Though neither are we to believe that miraculous Effects did always attend even those upon whom the Apostles themselves imposed their Hands. St. Paul himself very plainly intimates, that *all did not speak with Tongues, nor all work Miracles*, 1 Cor. xii. 29, 30. though, as far as we can learn, all were confirmed by Imposition of Hands: But this is properly the Subject of the

III. THIRD Head of my Discourse, under which I am to prove that Confirmation was
admi-

administer'd even in the miraculous Ages, not ^{S E R M.} so much for the sake of its *extraordinary*, as of ^{VII.} its *ordinary* Effects: That it was designed for a *standing* and *perpetual* Ordinance: And that accordingly it was continued through all Ages of the Church, even after the miraculous Effects of it ceased. And for this I need no other Proof than that Passage of the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, where he mentions the *Doctrine of the laying on of Hands*, Heb. vi. 2. among the Fundamentals of Religion: It is true, we must confess, that the laying on of Hands was used in three Ordinances besides that of which I am now treating; *viz.* in the *Ordination of Ministers*, in *Healing of the Sick*, and in the *Absolution of Penitents*: But then neither of these laying on of Hands was necessary or common to all Christians; nor was either of them to be reckoned amongst the Principles of Faith, or to be joined with the initiatory Doctrines of our Religion, amongst which the Holy Penman here recounts it. It must therefore be necessarily understood of that Imposition of Hands, which was used after Baptism, for conferring the Holy Ghost, in such Manner as my Text relates. A Truth which *Calvin* himself subscribes: For in his Note on this Place,

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Place, he grants that this single Text alone is abundantly sufficient to prove this Rite to have been of *Apostolical* Institution, and that therefore it ought to be still continued in the Church.

And indeed the History of the Church, by testifying the Continuance of it in all Times and Places, after the extraordinary or miraculous Gifts of the Spirit ceased, shews that it has been ever received and used as a perpetual and standing Ordinance of Christianity. And the Fathers, I am sure, in every Age were so far from thinking this Rite an obsolete Solemnity, that they esteemed it a necessary Appendage to Baptism; such a one indeed as none that were advanced to the Years of Discretion, could neglect without renouncing their Baptism, and consequently not without the last and utmost Hazard to their Souls. Which will evidently appear from the

IV. FOURTH Head, under which I am to examine what are the *standing Benefits* of this Rite, and to what *End* and *Purpose* it is now administer'd. And that is in short to *confirm* (as the very Name of it implies) the Contract or Covenant made in our Baptism: It is from hence that this second or succeeding Rite,

Rite, which was originally called the *Chrism*,^{SERM.}
or *Unction, Imposition of Hands*, and the *Sign*^{VII.}
or *Seal* of the Lord, in Process of Time took
the Name of *Confirmation*. But now since
in Baptism there is an Engagement made by
both Parties concerned in the Covenant, *viz.*
both by God and the Person baptized; it
follows that in Confirmation each Party *con-*
firms his Engagement.

To speak first with Relation to the *Person*
baptized; such Person, when he is confirmed,
by standing to the Contract he made in his
Baptism, gives his second and full Confirma-
tion that he will ever abide by it. And as to
those more especially who are baptized whilst
Infants, this Rite is most absolutely necessary
to make their Baptismal Covenant their own.
For though the Engagement of Sureties is
accepted by God, in behalf of Infants, which
are not in a Capacity to contract for them-
selves; yet when such Persons as have been
baptized in their Infancy, do afterwards arrive
to the Years of Discretion, God undoubtedly
expects them to acknowledge the Cove-
nant, and to take it upon themselves by their
own Act and Deed, if they propose or expect
to have any Benefit from it. This therefore
is one of the Considerations, on which our

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Church declares Confirmation should be observed: *viz.* "To the End that Children,
 " being now come to the Years of Discretion,
 " and having learned what their Godfathers
 " and Godmothers promised for them in
 " Baptism; they may themselves with their
 " own Mouth and Consent, openly before
 " the Church ratify and confirm the same;
 " and also promise, that by the Grace of
 " God they will evermore endeavour them-
 " selves faithfully to observe such things, as
 " they by their own Confession have assented
 " unto."

But as I just now hinted, God, as well as the Person baptized, is presumed to enter into a Covenant, at every Administration of Baptism. He promises and engages to *forgive the Sins* of the Person baptized for the Time past, and to vouchsafe him the *Assistance of his Holy Spirit* for the Time to come. And the first of these, the *Forgiveness of Sins*, is *effected* as well as *secured* in Baptism: In the Waters of which, Sin original (and actual, if the Person baptized have committed any, but duly repented of it) is washed away. But then the *Assistance of the Spirit* is, in Baptism; in the Baptism of Infants especially, rather promised than given: It being not supposed to

to be fully communicated, till the Bishop in this Rite imposes his Hands, and prays to God to send it down. For thus (as I have already had Occasion to observe) the Text assures us that *Philip* could not confer the Holy Ghost upon the *Samaritans* by *Baptism*; nor did the Holy Spirit vouchsafe to descend upon them, till the two Apostles came from *Jerusalem*, and obtained him by *Prayer* and *Imposition of Hands*. And both that and the Instance of the *Ephesians* also, who received the Holy Ghost, upon the Imposition of *St. Paul's* Hands, at a considerable Time after they were baptized, plainly shew that the laying on of Hands was necessary to make both one and the other *perfect* Christians, or to compleat the Baptism which they had before received.

For this Reason, though the Church in all Ages has constantly believed that *Baptism alone* is sufficient to save a Person who dies immediately after it; yet she has always affirmed that those, who live, have Need of Confirmation. Agreeably whereunto, when our own Church declares that Baptism of itself is sufficient to Salvation, she speaks only of *Children*. “ It is certain (saith she) by “ God’s Word, that Children which are

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“ baptized, dying before they commit actual Sin, are undoubtedly saved * ;” or (as it was worded in our first Common Prayer Book) “ Children being baptized (if they depart out of this Life in their Infancy) are undoubtedly saved †.” To such indeed the old Rubrick declares, “ No Man shall think that any Detriment shall come by deferring their Confirmation: But when Children come to that Age, that partly by the Frailty of their own Flesh, partly by the Assaults of the World and the Devil, they begin to be in Danger to fall into sundry Kinds of Sin; then it is most meet that Confirmation be ministred to those that be baptized, that by Imposition of Hands and Prayer, they may receive Strength and Defence against all Temptations to Sin, and the Assaults of the World and the Devil ‡.” It is true we are made, by the Sacrament of Baptism, *Heirs of GOD*, and admitted and received into the *Inheritance* as *Sons*: But still, till we receive, or at least till we are willing and de-

* Rubrick at the End of the Office of Publick Baptism of Infants.

† First Book of King *Edward VI.*

‡ Rubrick in the Old Books before the Office of Confirmation.

firous to receive the Rite of Confirmation, we ^{S E R M.}
are but *Babes in Christ*, in the literal Sense : ^{VII.}

We are meerly Infants in Christianity, not able to resist the Violence of Opposition, but lye exposed to every Assault, and in Danger of being foiled by every Temptation. In Baptism we are sensible, that, though it be administered to a Child that knows not what is done to *him*, yet such Child is admitted into the Ark of Christ's Church, is listed under his Banner, and marked for his Soldier, upon the Promises and Security which others give for his future Fidelity : But still it is necessary, that, when he is of Age to enter upon his Warfare, he be equipped for the Battle, and furnished with Arms to withstand the Enemy. And this we conceive done in the Rite we are discoursing of: When the Person who in Baptism was born to Life, is now strengthened and confirmed to fight. The Holy Ghost, who graciously descends with his saving Presence upon the Waters of Baptism, there washes away our original Guilt, delivers us from God's Wrath, and renders us innocent and pure in his Sight : But in this second additional Ordinance, he enters into every Person who religiously and devoutly receives it, daily to increase and

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multiply in him the Gifts of his Grace, to dwell in him for ever, and so to lead him in the Knowledge and Obedience of God's Holy Word, that in the End he may obtain everlasting Life in his eternal Kingdom. So that although the Benefits of *Regeneration* are sufficient (as I have said) for those who presently leave this World after they are baptized; yet to those who live, and are reserved to fight the Combats of the World, the auxiliary Aids of Confirmation are also necessary. So at least thought the good Fathers of the Primitive Church *; who in their Writings too observe that our Saviour himself did not enter into the Wilderness, the Place of Temptation, before he was prepared for it by the Descent of the Spirit: And again, that the Apostles, though they had received Baptismal Grace, and though cheered and encouraged with their Master's Presence, were yet timorous and fearful, not daring to stand the least Shock or Trial, till strengthened and confirmed by the Holy Ghost. But from that Instant, we know, they came forth into the World, fearless and undaunted, not to be

* Bingham's Antiquities, L. 12. c. 3. §. 6. vol. 4. p. 405, 406.

moved or shaken from the Faith by any Apprehensions either of Prison or Death.

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This I hope is sufficient to shew of what Use and Benefit Confirmation is; I shall now proceed in the

V. FIFTH Place, To enquire into the *proper Candidates* for this Rite, or who the Persons are that are called on to receive it. And here we are to attend to the Voice of our Church, which orders, that “ so soon
“ as Children are come to a *competent Age*,
“ and can say in their *Mother Tongue*, the
“ *Creed*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Ten*
“ *Commandments*; and also can answer to the
“ *other Questions* of the *Church Catechism*,
“ they shall be brought to the Bishop, in or-
“ der to be confirmed.” From whence we learn that a Person's being *meerly* baptized is not a sufficient Qualification, except he also understand the Nature of his Baptism, *i. e.* except he can give an Account of his Faith, and knows what Privileges he enjoys, and what Obligations he is laid under by it.

Here indeed our *present* Church differs something (and I think very rightly) from the Practice of the *ancient* one. For in the Primitive Times, such Persons as were bap-

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tized in the Presence of the Bishop, were immediately presented to him in order for Confirmation: Nor was this done only with respect to Persons of riper Years; but also with regard to Children and Infants, who, if a Bishop was present, were frequently confirmed immediately upon their Baptism. The same is practised in the *Greek Church* to this Day. And our own Church indeed declares of those that are baptized after they are come to Years of Discretion, that "it is expedient
 " that every such Person should be confirmed by the Bishop, so soon after his Baptism as conveniently may be; that so he
 " may be admitted to the Holy Communion." But then it is to be observed that such Persons she expects and requires to be "sufficiently instructed in the Principles of the
 " Christian Religion," even before their Baptism. But with relation to those who are baptized in their *Infancy*, the Case is different: For it being now required that Persons, when confirmed, should renew the Vow that was made for them at their Baptism, and ratify the same in their own Persons; it is fit they should know and understand the Nature of the Obligation, before they bind themselves under it. And therefore the Confirmation

tion of such Children is deferred, with a ^{SERM.}
great deal of Reason, till they are come to a ^{VII.}
competent Age, and *can say their Catechism*.

Children indeed, according to their Capacities,
are of a *competent Age*, at different Years:
Some being earlier in their Understandings,
and some later. But because it may be bet-

ter that Children of forward Understandings
should wait a little for their Confirmation,
than that Children of backward and slow Ap-
prehensions should be admitted to it too soon;
therefore the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop
of *London* is pleased to direct that those who
are offered to be confirmed by him, be of
the Age of 14 Years at least. And none of
this Age, if they have common Understand-
ing, can be thought too young to have this
Ordinance administered to them. For it is
very evidently the Design of our Church, that
Children be confirmed, though after their
Infancy, yet before they can well enter into
a Course of Sin; that so the Holy Spirit may
take early Possession of their youthful Hearts,
and prevent some Sins, which, without his
Assistance, the very Tenderness of their Age
would be apt to expose them to. It is in-
deed highly expedient (as I have shewed al-
ready) that those who are confirmed should
be

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be old enough to understand the Nature and Advantages of the Rite they are admitted to, and the Obligations it lays upon them. And if they are duly apprized of this, they are deemed by our Church to be qualified enough. For they that are capable of this Knowledge, are at Years to discern between good and evil. And therefore that must be the proper Time to secure them, as much as may be, in the Paths of Virtue, by the Use of this Ordinance, which is appointed to that End. And this is what is expressly asserted in the old Rubrick I had Occasion to take Notice of under my next foregoing Head:

“ Forasmuch as Confirmation is ministred to
 “ them that be baptized, that by Imposition
 “ of Hands and Prayer, they may receive
 “ Strength and Defence against all Tempta-
 “ tions to Sin, and the Assaults of the World
 “ and the Devil ; it is most meet to be mi-
 “ nistred when Children come to that Age,
 “ that partly by the Frailty of their own
 “ Flesh, partly by the Assaults of the World
 “ and the Devil, they begin to be in Danger
 “ to fall into sundry Kinds of Sin.”

This is all the Limitation that is any where given by our Church: She does not, to a Year, prescribe how soon a Child may receive

ceive it: However she takes particular Care, SERM.
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ordinarily qualified to receive the Communion. I find they are desirous of being confirmed, but can't at present obtain that Blessing; both the Church allows, and Reason argues, that they should not be debarred one Ordinance, only because it is not in their Power to obtain another, which yet they desire. Here Christian Charity will plead in their Behalf, that those Qualifications, which can't be procured by ordinary Means, God will supply by *his extraordinary* Grace.

But then this *extraordinary* Grace we are to depend upon no longer, than till the ordinary Means can be obtained. We are not, because our Confirmation has been *deferred*, to lay it wholly aside: nor to think that because we have communicated before we had Opportunity of being confirmed, we have afterwards no Occasion to be confirmed at all. And this I speak to obviate or rather to remove a Mistake, I took Occasion to mention upon my Entrance on this Subject, and in which I apprehend all those to be involved, who look upon Confirmation *meerly* as a Form of taking the Baptismal Vow upon themselves, and therefore when they have renewed that Vow in the Eucharist, they think they stand in no Need of doing the same

same again in Confirmation, which, being ^{S E R M.} no Sacrament, must be, they conclude, an ^{VII.} inferior Ordinance.

But from what has been said, I think it may be inferred that Confirmation is designed for another End, besides that I just now mentioned: It is intended, we have seen, not only to engage and bind ourselves to God, but also to procure for us the Assistance of his Spirit to keep this Engagement. And this is a Privilege we ought to apply for, in the Way that is prescribed to us. If we expect any Grace from God, we must ask for and seek it in the Ordinance peculiarly appropriated to it. And when we see *various Institutions* ordained, we are to suppose that the *Benefits* which each of them convey are *various* also; and consequently that the Benefits or Privileges of one Ordinance are not to be obtained by the Ministration of another. We may infer this from a very remarkable Occurrence recorded in the History of *the Acts of the Apostles*. We read there, that whilst *Peter* was preaching to *Cornelius* and his Company that were assembled together to hear the Word, *the Holy Ghost fell on them all*, Acts x. 44. even before the Apostle had laid his Hands on them, or so much

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as baptized them. Now had such Persons as argue that there is no Need of Confirmation after the Eucharist, been present with the Apostle at this Event; they would very likely have thought that there was no need to baptize *Cornelius* and his Company, after such a Confirmation: For the *Gift of the Holy Ghost* was already poured on them: They heard them speak with Tongues, and magnify GOD, ver. 45, 46. And therefore they would have asked, What could Baptism confer on them more than they had already received? But *Peter* knew well that the Spirit had more Gifts to bestow than one, and that one did not supply, or make up for, the Want of another: And therefore he reasoned another Way, and consequently asked a quite different Question. *Can any Man forbid Water* (saith he) *that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* ver. 47. The Holy Ghost, it is true, was given: But Baptism, in his Judgment, was necessary notwithstanding: And therefore commanded he them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord, ver. 48. From this Instance I argue, that if the Want of Baptism could not be supplied by so visible a Descent of the Holy Ghost; it must follow, that a Rite instituted

stituted for invoking the Holy Ghost, can't be supplied by Administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

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We know, that by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper the Spirit of Ghostly Strength is conveyed: And therefore in the Times of Primitive Devotion that Blessed Sacrament was weekly administered, that those who would be safe against their spiritual Enemies might from thence be armed with fresh Supplies of the Divine Assistance. But still we are to remember that the principal Design of the Holy Eucharist is to renew the Work of preceding Rites; to repair the Breaches the Enemy has made; and to supply fresh Forces where the old ones fail. For this Reason, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, or of the Body and Blood of our Blessed Lord, is to be continually repeated; whereas Baptism and Confirmation are to be administered but once. And indeed it may as well be imagined that because the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper conveys to every devout Receiver the Remission of his Sins; it may therefore supply the Want of Baptism; as that because it conveys Ghostly Strength, therefore there is no Need of Confirmation after it. Or again the Lord's Supper itself may

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may as well be omitted, because Prayer has the Promise of *whatsoever we shall ask of GOD the Father in the Son's Name*, John xvi. 23. as Confirmation be rendered useless or unnecessary, because the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will supply us with Grace.

In a Word, I would ask any Man of common Sense, whether Confirmation be not a very unacceptable Ceremony, an Institution very unworthy of the Apostles, if all the Ends of it may be answered and obtained by receiving the Communion of the Body and Blood of our gracious Redeemer? For to what Purpose should so solemn a Rite have been applied, and confined too to the highest Order of Ministers in the Church; if the End of Confirmation which a Bishop only can administer, can be answered by the Communion which every Parish Priest so frequently celebrates? Certainly the Institution of this Rite, notwithstanding the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; the confining the Ministrati-
on of it to Bishops alone; and the obliging every Person humbly to sue for it, at the Bishop's Hands; is itself a Proof beyond all Contradiction, that Confirmation was designed for Ends which the Participation of the Lord's Supper can never answer.—But this
Mention

Mention of the MINISTERS of Confirmation, puts me in Mind of the

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VI. SIXTH Head of my Discourse, to which it is Time I should now proceed; and under which I am to shew whose *Office* and *Duty* it is to perform it. And here again my Text will instruct us, that it is a Ministration reserved to the very highest Order of Officers in the Church. *Philip*, when amongst the *Samaritans*, had gone as far as his Commission would extend: He had converted and baptized them, which was all that He, or any but an Apostle, at that Time, could do. And therefore we find that the Apostles at *Jerusalem*, in order to perfect them, and to obtain for them the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, sent down two of their own Number, *Peter* and *John*, to perform a Service peculiar to their Rank and Degree in the Church; and consequently such as *Philip* and all of any inferior Degree had no Power to administer. And from that Time to this we find the Honour of dispensing this Ordinance has been always reserved to the Ministry of Bishops in the Christian Church. For Bishops are the chief or principal Pastors in their several Dioceses. The Ministers of the

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several Parishes or Divisions within their Jurisdictions being but *their Curates*, acting under *them* in the several *Congregations committed to their Charge*, as the Prayer in the daily Service of our Liturgy properly speaks. To these principal Overseers therefore of the Flock of Christ, who are Spiritual Fathers in his Church, the conferring this Blessing has ever been reserved, as the Practice of the most Primitive Ages shews. And such Practice is the only Rule for us to go by. What the First Christians did in Rituals, and consigned as fit to be done by Posterity; *that* in such Things we ought to attend to, as our Rule and our Warrant. Otherwise we shall have no other Rule to walk by than Humour or Chance. But I must not now dwell too long upon a Head; and therefore I shall hasten to my

VII. SEVENTH Particular, which is to explain the *Form* and *Manner* in which the Rite of Confirmation is to be administer'd. And this we learn from the Text is to be by *Imposition of Hands and Prayer*. *Peter and John, when they were come down to the Samaritans, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: Then laid they their*
Hands

Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. SERM. VII. The same Effect which attended the same Office, when performed to the *Ephesians* by the Apostle *St. Paul*. And first, as to the *Laying on of Hands*, as it is one of the most ancient Ceremonies in the World; so it has always been used to determine the Blessing pronounced to *those very Persons* on whom Hands are laid; and to import also that the *Persons* who thus lay on their Hands, act and bless by *Divine Authority*. Thus *Jacob* blessed *Epbraim* and *Manasses*, Gen. xlviii. 14. not as a Parent only, but as a Prophet. *Moses* laid his Hands on *Joshua*, Numb. xxviii. 18, 23. by Command from GOD, and as supreme Governor over the People. And thus our Blessed Lord, whilst in the State of Humiliation, laid his Hands upon the *little Children*, and *those that were sick with divers Diseases*, to bless and to heal them, Mark x. 46. Luke iv. 40. When indeed he was pleased to give his Spirit to his Apostles just before his Ascension, he acted by a Power paramount and inherent: He gave of his own, and therefore dispensed it with Authority. *For he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*, John xx. 22. But this would have been absurd

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in any that acted by Appointment or Delegation: and therefore the Apostles, from so ancient a Practice, and so universal a Custom, instituted, or rather continued, the Rite of Imposition of Hands, for communicating the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. And this was so constantly and regularly observed by them, that the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, calls the whole Office, *Laying on of Hands*, Heb. vi. 2.

But though the *Laying on of Hands* is a Token that the Bishop acts in this Office by Divine Authority; yet at the same Time he sues to Heaven for the Blessing he bestows, in humble Acknowledgment that the precious Gifts hereby conferred, are not the Effect of his own Holiness and Power, but of the abundant Mercy and Favour of *him*, who is the only Fountain of all Goodness and Grace. Under a due Sense of this even the Apostles in my Text, when they laid their Hands on the *Samaritans*, *prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost*. And after their Example do their Successors now, in our Office, pray over every Person, on whom their Hands are imposed, in these Words following. *Defend, O Lord, this thy Servant with thy heavenly Grace; that*
he

he may continue thine for ever; and daily in-
crease in thy Holy Spirit more and more, un-
till he come unto thy everlasting Kingdom, A-
men.

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VIII. Having thus gone through the several Heads of my Discourse, I shall now conclude with a close *Exhortation* to such of you, as have not yet been confirmed, to offer yourselves to the Bishop at his approaching Visitation. But here I shall address myself only to the Religious and Well-disposed. For I am not insensible that all Discourses on such Subjects as this, which I have now been treating of, are with many the Occasion of *Ridicule*. And with such I don't expect to be heard with any Success. Were the *Ordinances*, or even the *Sacraments* of Religion, to be sounded in their Ears ever so loud, or ever so long; they would still be deaf, they will hear nothing till the Trumpet wakes their stupified Senses at the last Day.

But then again I am sensible there are others, who though they neglect this Ordinance of Confirmation, neglect it not so much out of *Contempt*, as from a *false Shame*. They have omitted it till they are grown pretty much into Years; and now through

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Bashfulness know not how to comply with a Rite, in which they think none but Children are properly concerned. With these I would leave, with all the Tenderness that may be, a single Question to be thought of by them: And that is, If People forbear the appointed Ordinances of Religion from *Bashfulness* or *Shame*;—with what Courage will they stand before their Saviour and Judge in the last Day? When he has foretold them beforehand, that, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of him and his Words in this adulterous and sinful Generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels*, Mark viii. 36. It is to be feared such People, if they had not been brought to *Baptism* by their *Parents*, during their *Infancy*, would have been ashamed when grown up to ask it for themselves. And indeed they who through *Shame* forbear, in their own Persons, to confirm the *Baptismal Covenant* and *Engagement* which their *Godfathers* or *Sureties* then made for them, do in Effect renounce the *Benefits* and *Advantages* of their *Baptism*, and render it wholly null and void. For when they have arrived at an Age to transact for themselves; the only Way to secure such

Bene-

Benefits as had been promised them by Sure-
ties transacting for them, is to come forth,
and lay Claim to them, in the Face of the
Church, and by publickly acknowledging
and embracing the Covenant as their own
Act and Deed. “ And he who is not will-
“ ing to do this; what does he in Effect,
“ but in all Construction of Reason and com-
“ mon Sense, disclaim and disannul, and
“ cut himself off from all Benefits by that
“ Covenant indented for? And surely to
“ such unthankful, careless Wretches, the
“ Church does very justly deny those Privi-
“ leges of higher and more perfect Commu-
“ nion, which they alone are fit to rejoice
“ in, who are not content to be called Chri-
“ stians, but think it necessary to their Hap-
“ piness to be Christians indeed.——And
“ indeed it is then only that we honour ei-
“ ther Christ or his Gospel, when we pub-
“ lickly thank him for taking us into Cove-
“ nant with him in our Infancy; when we
“ satisfy the Church that we have considered
“ the Nature of the Conditions of it; and
“ that upon Consideration we find our Faith
“ to be reasonable, and our Service Freedom.
“ That therefore we will now no longer be
“ Christians by Necessity or Chance; but by

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“ Deliberation and Choice ; and in full Con-
 “ viction of the Excellence and Advantages be-
 “ longing to that Character. And therefore
 “ again we will joyfully offer ourselves to
 “ contract afresh, bid Battel to our spiritual
 “ Enemies, and shew that, as we are not
 “ ashamed of what was done for us before,
 “ so we are determined never to retract what
 “ we shall do for ourselves now *.

These, my Dear Christians, are the Con-
 siderations which ought to induce all such of
 you, as have never received this Ordinance
 as yet, to receive it now. And you that
 have been *Godfathers* or *Godmothers* for others,
 I must also remind of that Charge which
 was solemnly delivered to you at the Font,
viz. that “ ye take Care that such of those
 “ Children, for whom ye stand responsible,
 “ as can say the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer
 “ and the Ten Commandments in the vul-
 “ gar Tongue, and are further instructed in
 “ the Church Catechism, be now brought
 “ to the Bishop to be confirmed,” and to
 take their Baptismal Vow and Engagement
 upon their own Persons. For by this Means
 only can you free yourselves from the Guilt

* Dr. *Stanhope* on the Gospel for Whitsun Tuesday. Vol.
 III. p. 145, 146.

of their Errors and Miscarriage, and discharge
that Trust with which you have been in-
vested by God and the Church. Not that
Godfathers and Godmothers only are thus
concerned: But *all*, who have any *Children*
or *Servants* under their Care, are to see that
they do not, for Want of proper Instructions
and Exhortations, neglect and forego a Mi-
nistration so useful, and so highly needful, as
you see this is, to make them full and perfect
Christians.

And this as to your Children, your Sons
and your Daughters, your own Flesh and
Blood, I shall suppose you will readily enough
undertake; at least if you desire them to be
as happy in the next World, as you wish them
in this. But let me remind you, there are
others who deserve and want your Care, your
Servants I mean, who want and deserve it so
much the more, as it is through an Attention
and Application to your Affairs, that they are
careless of *their own*. For it is a melancholy
View, though too apparent a one not to be
observed, that too many Servants have but
little Devotion, except what they pay to those
they attend on. How ignorant the greatest
Number of them are of the Duty and Service
they owe to God, the Manner of their Beha-
viour,

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vour, during their Attendance in the House of God, too frequently shews. From thence one would judge, (what it is to be feared is often the Case,) that they think the Duties and Offices of Religion are things they are not concerned in; and that they come to Church, not as the Servants of God but of Men: And that the Time they spend in it, they think not allowed them for the Benefit and Improvement of their own Souls, but rather, like their Attendance at other publick Meetings, for the Credit of their Masters. I do not speak this of Servants universally: I observe, and hope, and promise myself much better things from some here present. But that what I say is too true of many of them, you know too well. But though this Negligence and Carelessness in Religion chiefly affects such Servants themselves; yet let not their Masters and Mistresses imagine, that they are free from a Share in the Guilt, except they use all proper Means to instruct them better.

And the best Way to make your Servants observant of the Duty they owe yourselves, is to make them first the Servants of God. Let me therefore exhort you to lay hold of the Opportunity that is now offering, to bring them, if you can, to the Acknowledgment
and

and Profession of that Religion into which they ^{SERM.}
have been baptized; to vow in their own ^{VII.}
Names, and to take on their Persons, the
Practice and serious Observance of it for the
future; and that the Holiness of their Lives
may always prove, that *this Grace* shall not
have been bestowed upon them in vain; but that
GOD is in them of a Truth. And may he
grant to all his Servants Grace to withstand
the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and
the Devil, and with pure Hearts and Minds
to follow him the only true GOD, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.



SERMON VIII.

The Parable of the Sower.

LUKE viii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

A Sower went out to sow his Seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the Way-side, and it was trodden down, and the Fowls of the Air devoured it.

And some fell upon a Rock, and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked Moisture.

And some fell among Thorns, and the Thorns sprang up with it and choked it.

And others fell on good Ground, and sprang up, and bare Fruit an hundred Fold.

SERM. VIII. **I**N order to make the best Improvement of the Words, let us first examine into the Sense and Occasion of them.

Now the Occasion of them our Lord's own Exposition shews was to set before us a very melancholy Relation of the great Unsuccessfulness and Unfruitfulness which attended his Preach-

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Preaching amongst the *Jews*: Not but he ^{SERM.}
had Hearers enough, and in Abundance: ^{VIII.}

For we are told, that just before he delivered this Parable, *Much People were gathered together, and were come to him out of every City*; and pressed upon him in such Multitudes to hear the Gospel, that to get out of the Throng, he was forced to remove into a little Ship that lay waiting upon the Lake of *Gennesareth*, close to the Shore, and from thence to preach to them, whilst they stood crowding on the Land to hear him. Compare *ver. 4.* with *Matt. xiii. 2.* and *Mark iv. 1.* Hearers therefore and Followers our Lord had abundantly: And yet, as it appears from the whole Course of his Preaching, the Numbers were, in Comparison, but very few, by whom he was heard with any Success. That the little Progress therefore which the Gospel made in the Hearts of his Hearers, might not be imputed to the Gospel itself, or to him that preached it; he utters this Parable of a Sower and his Seed; reminding them that, though the Seed may be good, and the Sower ever so diligent and careful, it may yet come to pass that, for want of due Preparation in the Ground, three Parts in four of the Seed may be lost. That

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one Part of it, being scattered *by the Way-side*, or on the Paths, would be trodden down by Men, or picked up by the *Fowls of the Air* that devour it: That another Part, falling among *stony Places*, and not having Earth sufficient to cover it, would spring up too soon, and through the Reflection of the *Sun* too vehemently from the Stones, would wither for Want of *Root* and *Moisture*; and that a third Part falling into Places overrun with *Briars and Thorns* would be choked by the Weeds that grow up with it, and so hindered from bringing any Fruit to Perfection; whilst only a fourth Part, that happens to fall upon good Ground, would bring forth Fruit, and that in such Plenty, as to yield thirty, sixty, or an hundred Fold. Not that the Harvest should bring in an hundred Times the Quantity of all the Seed that is originally sown; for much of the Seed miscarries, we see, and comes to nothing: But that when the Corn happens to fall upon very good Ground; it comes often to pass (as Experience has shewn) that so many Stalks springing out from one Grain, and so many Grains on every Stalk, that for a single Grain sown in the Ground, the Reaper shall receive an hundred in it's Stead.

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This was the Parable, and so plain and applicable a Parable it was to the Occasion of his using it, that one would think the *Jews* could not possibly avoid the knowing what he meant by it. And yet we find by the Account of the Evangelists, that neither they, nor even his Disciples themselves, could apprehend him. Not that this Method or Way of teaching was cloudy and obscure to an attentive Hearer; but that the *Jews*, through their Dullness and Want of Application to the Mysteries of Religion, were indifferent whether they understood him or not. And this, as the Evangelists also tell us, was *one Reason why* our Lord thought it proper to *speak in Parables*, viz. that those who did not think the Mysteries of the Gospel worth searching into, might be left, for their Punishment, in their Ignorance and Stupidity; whilst his Disciples and others, who thought them deserving their Attention and Regard, might, if they pleased, upon Application to him, at any Time hear them unfolded and explained. Accordingly we find that in this very Parable, on which we are discoursing, as soon as our Lord was left by the careless and indifferent Crowd, his Disciples, or *they that were about him with the Twelve*, Com-
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pare *Mark* iv. 10. being more intent or desirous to know what the Parable implied, ask their Master with a commendable Curiosity *what it might be*, ver. 9. Their gracious Lord, after a mild and gentle Reprehension of their Slowness to know and conceive *the Mysteries of the Kingdom of GOD*, *Mark* iv. 11—13. and particularly of their Dullness in not understanding so plain and obvious a Parable as this; opens it to them in such a Manner as shewed them both the Meaning and Applicableness of it to the Occasion of his using it. *The Parable* (saith he) *is this*. Compare the three Evangelists together. *The Seed is the Word of GOD: The Sower is he that preacheth the Word*. [The Hearers are the Soils on which the Seed falls.] *Those which receive the Seed by the Way-side, are they which hear the Word, but understand it not. Then cometh the Wicked One, i. e. Satan or the Devil, and catcheth away the Word that was sown in their Hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They, which receive the Seed into stony Places, are they who, when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with Gladness and Joy; but then, having no Root in themselves, they endure but for a Time, and afterwards when Affliction or Persecution*

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secution arises for the Word's Sake, they are immediately offended, and in Time of Temptation fall away. And they which receive the Seed among Thorns, are they which, when they have heard the Word, go forth, and are choked with the Cares of this World, with the Deceitfulness of Riches, with the Pleasures of this Life, and with the Lusts of other Things entering in, and so are hindered from bringing their Fruit to Ripeness and Perfection. But they which receive Seed into the good Ground, are they which, hearing the Word with an honest and good Heart, understand it, and keep it, and bring forth Fruit with Patience, some thirty Fold, some sixty, and some an hundred. This is the Parable, both Letter and Sense, which our Church proposes to our Thoughts at this Time. This therefore I design to make the Subject of my Discourse, and in order to it shall treat of it in the Manner following, viz.

I. FIRST, I shall observe from it that the Unfruitfulness which generally attends the Preaching the Word of God, is not owing to the Barrenness of the Word, or the Deficiency of the Preacher, but to some Indisposition or other in the Hearer.

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II. SECONDLY, I shall enquire from the Cases here mentioned, what the Indispositions are that hinder the Word from having it's due and intended Effect.

III. THIRDLY, I shall shew with what Diligence and Care those that hear should receive the Word, in order to receive it with Fruitfulness and Success.

IV. FOURTHLY, I shall declare what Profit or Advantage attends the Word, when received and cherished as the Parable describes. And then

V. FIFTHLY, I shall proceed to apply the whole in order to make the Doctrine advanced of Use to yourselves.

I. FIRST then I shall observe from the Parable before us, that the *Unfruitfulness* which generally attends the Preaching the Word of God, is not owing to the *Barrenness of the Word*, or the *Deficiency of the Preacher*, but to some *Indisposition* or other in the *Hearer*. This the Parable plainly shews: The Seed, you know, is as good which falls *by the Way-side*, [upon the Joint Ways or Bawks] into *stony Places*, or *among Thorns*, as that which falls *upon good Ground*; and while on those Places it is barren, and in this

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this appears in a plentiful Crop, the Difference is in the Soil and not in the Seed. This is an Observation that every Husbandman has, I don't doubt, made, as he thinks, too often for himself. Since therefore it is an Observation you are so ready to admit; let me remind you that the Case is the very same with Respect to the Doctrine or Word of God. However sound the Word may be, however careful or diligent the Preacher; it is yet fruitful or barren, according to the Disposition of the Heart that receives it. This was very plainly verified in the Preaching of Christ to the Multitude that followed him; who all heard the *same* Doctrine from *him*, and yet the Drift of the Parable shews, that they were but few in whom his Word produced any Fruit: In most of them we find it yielded none. The Sufficiency of the Preacher therefore, either in chusing his Doctrine, or in the Manner of his delivering it, is no Security for the Success of his Preaching: Since we find that the Blessed Jesus himself, the eternal Wisdom of his Almighty Father, who wanted neither Authority nor Words to gain upon his Hearers, yet found it difficult to insil into one in four among them, any thing that might remain or improve to Perfection;

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fection. However his prevailing upon those very few, shewed the Word to be good, and the Preacher able; and that the three Parts of his Hearers, upon whom it was lost, were themselves the Occasion of wasting the Seed. It is losing Time therefore to prove a Truth so very obvious and plain: It will be more useful to proceed to the Subject of my

II. SECOND Head, under which I am to enquire, What the general *Indispositions* are, which hinder the Word from having it's due and intended Effect. Now the Indispositions in the Parable are three: The Particulars I shall mention as I go along: But first let me observe to you, that all the Faults or Causes of Unfruitfulness are laid upon *the Ground*: There is not so much as a single Supposition in all the Parable that the Seed may be spoiled by *Floods* or *Droughts*, by *Frosts* or *Colds*, or any other Cause purely external, or such as the Man can't, if he would, possibly prevent: No; it is supposed on the contrary, that if there be no Fault or Impediment in the Soil, a plentiful Harvest will certainly ensue: A plain Intimation, that though the Blessings of Heaven are (for Reasons of Providence) wanting sometimes to the Seeds of
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the Earth; yet never are they wanting to cherish and cultivate the Seeds of the Gospel. SERM.
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But if the Hearer be careful and diligent to perform the Part expected of him; if he duly prepare his Heart which the Ground represents; he need not be afraid of any Deficiency in the Grace of God, but may assuredly trust and rely upon him, for every Thing that he must contribute to the Increase. If the Seed therefore of the Gospel be render'd unfruitful, it is because it falls upon a barren Soil; and if the Soil be barren, it is owing to the Husbandman's own Neglect to till and manure it: to his Carelessness in suffering Paths or By-Roads to be made over his Land, and to his Sloth in not duly ridding and clearing it of Pebbles and Thorns. These are the Hindrances; Hindrances occasioned by the Hearers themselves, against the Fruitfulness of the Word. Whoever are the Preachers, whether Men or Angels, or the Son of Man superior to either, it is impossible it should ever grow up to Perfection, whilst such Impediments lye against it. But to shew distinctly, what those Letts or Impediments are, it is necessary that I should proceed to mention them singly, in the Order that the Parable lays them before us.

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Now the first Cause that is mentioned why some of the Seed that is sown miscarries, is because it *falls by the Way-side*, upon the Road or Path, upon a Joint Way or Mear. For no Furrows being turned up in these Places to receive it; or if there be, they being presently poached and spoiled by Carriages or Persons that go to and fro; the Seed must of Course be wasted and lost, some of it lying open and exposed to the Birds of the Air that devour it, and the rest being trod down and trampled into the Ground so as it cannot spring up again. Now by this Similitude, our Saviour (as he is pleased to explain himself) designs to represent those careless Hearers, who receive the Word they don't know how, only by coming with the rest of the People to hear and look on, for the Sake of doing as other Folks do, and that the Rest of their Neighbours, who have some Religion, may not think that they have none. Now as, when you are sowing your Corn in the Fields, you are willing to take in the utmost Extent of the Ground prepared to receive the Seed; and so cannot possibly avoid throwing some Corns on the Paths beyond it; so when a Preacher endeavours to hit the various Tempers and Dispositions of Men; it is impossible

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but sometimes he must make an Impression upon those who are present meerly by Chance. But then as the Corn that falls by the Way-side is immediately lost in the Manner, and for the Reasons, already described; so when this Sort of Hearers of the Word (and God knows how many such may be amongst you) when these, I say, receive an Impression; the Impression is so slight, the Word lies so open, and bare, upon the Surface of their Hearts, that like the common Way it is exposed to be erased by the next they meet: As soon as they are gone, some old Companion or Associate in Sin, by some new Impertinence, beats the Impression out of their Mind; or Satan, that ravaging Harpye, that unclean and diabolical Fowl of the Air, is at hand to devour the Seed that was sown, and to leave no Memory or Mark of it behind. With these therefore the Word is so far from producing any Fruit or Increase, that it does not spring up, it does not so much as take Root in the Heart. It is received indeed into the outward Ears; but cannot work itself into the Mind: Having therefore no Earth to cover it, it is soon snatched away and lost.

This is the Character of the first Sort of Men to whom the Gospel is unsuccessfully

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preached. The next Sort our blessed Lord describes by Seed that is sown on *stony Ground*; where it not having room to strike deep into the Earth, it shoots upwards into Height as soon as it is sown, and for Want of due Root, through which the Moisture is conveyed from the Earth to the Blade, withers away through the Heat of the Sun, which, being reflected too strongly from the stony Ground, scorches it up. Now the Persons our Lord intends by this, are they who not only hear the Word, but receive it also at first with Joy. As the stony Ground, was Ground notwithstanding designed, and prepared in some Degree, to receive the Seed; so these are such who come to the Word, not by Accident and Chance, but purposely and with Design to hear and understand, to learn and improve. Accordingly we find that as the Seed among Rocks has Earth enough to open the Grain, and let the Blade spring up to View; so here the Mind is so far disposed to receive the Word, that it immediately desires to exert itself upon what it hears. The high and lofty Truths of the Gospel, and the great and glorious Things it ensures, glare upon such Men and fire their Souls, and animate them on a Spurt to believe and obtain. But then as the Seed
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that sprang up so hastily among the Rocks for Want of Root, as hastily withered away and decay'd; so Men that with such sudden Sallies of Thought, resolve to believe, as apprehending no Difficulties to lie in their Way; These Men, I say, as suddenly forget or change their Resolutions for Want of their being duly fixed in their Minds. *They begin to build before they sit down to count the Cost; before they know whether they are able to finish,* Luke xiv. 28. They resolve upon Religion before they consider the Duties it enjoins, and the Restraints it lays; before they enquire whether they have Strength and Constancy to go through it. Being therefore only apprized of the *Advantages* of a Christian Life, and not of its *Difficulties*; no Wonder if as soon as the Difficulties appear, they give Way to what they had taken no Care to be armed against. In Times especially of *Persecution and Discouragement*, (which the *Scorching of the Sun* in this Parable intends, compare Rev. xvi. 8.) it can hardly be expected, but that *they* must be offended and stumble at the Word, who embrace it only as the *Gospel of Peace*, and are not aware of what our Saviour has graciously foretold them, that it will sometimes also bring them in *Danger of Fire and Sword*.
And

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And thus we have considered two Sorts of Ground that is ill manur'd, or not duly prepared to receive the Seed : The third Sort, which is equally unprofitable, remains still to be spoke to, and that is the Ground which is overrun by *Briars and Thorns, by Rubbish and Weeds* that choak the Seed, and hinder it from bringing any Fruit to Perfection. It suffers indeed the Seed to spring up, and the Blade to expand ; and so makes a Show as if a Harvest would ensue : But then the Weeds, which lay hidden and lurking in the Ground, rise up after it, exhaust the Moisture of the Earth from the Roots of the true Seed, and prevent its answering the Expectations of the Sower. Now this again (according to our Lord's Interpretation) intends those Men who hear the Word, and attend to it too, and strive in some Measure to apply it seriously, that so it may not be spoken in vain. But then when the Effects of their receiving the Word should really be seen ; their Business or Diversions, their worldly Concerns or their trifling Amusements interfere, and will not suffer it to have the true and intended Effect. For *when they have heard the Word* (saith our Lord) *they go forth and are choked with the Cares of this World, with the Deceitfulness of Riches,*
and

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and with the Pleasures of this Life, which, together with the Lusts of other things that enter in, hinder them from bringing forth any Fruit to Ripeness and Perfection. This, I

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doubt, is what needs no Proof: Too many of us, I fear, feel the Strength and Force of the Parable, and readily assent and subscribe to the Truth of it. For I would willingly hope that the Seed of the Gospel, which I endeavour, as duly and as diligently as I can, to propagate amongst you, takes Root and springs up in many of your Hearts, and often brings forth some good Designs to cultivate and encourage it. But then, alas! yourselves can witness, how often again these Designs have been blasted, by the Revival of your innate Appetites and Desires to the Poms of the World, to the Pleasures of Life, and the Gratifications of Sense; which immediately seize and engage the whole Attention of the Mind, and will not suffer the good Impressions that have been made upon it to proceed any further. For as Thorns and Briars have ever been the natural Product of the Earth, since the Curse was laid upon it for the Sin of Man; so have perverse and depraved Inclinations been the natural and genuine Product of the Mind, ever since the Time that Man fell,

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fell. And therefore as it cannot be otherwise supposed than that Weeds, which the Ground of itself produces, should prevail over good Seed, which, before it grows, must be sown and cultivated with Labour and Toil, except due Care be taken to suppress and keep the Weeds under: So neither can we imagine but that the worldly and lustful Dispositions of the Heart, which are natural to it, must prevent it from bringing any holy Resolutions (which must be instilled and engrafted) to Ripeness and Perfection, unless a proper Care be taken to check such Inclinations at their first Appearing; which leads me to the

III. THIRD general Head of my Discourse, under which I am to shew, *with what Diligence and Care* those that hear should receive the Word, in order to receive it with Fruitfulness and Success. And here we have Light sufficient to direct us from the Description which our Lord gives of those who hear as they ought to do, in his Explanation of the Parable before us. *They (saith he) which receive the Seed into the good Ground, are they which hearing the Word with an honest and good Heart, understand it, and keep it, and bring forth Fruit with Patience.* Now this
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Character which our blessed Lord gives of the *profitable* Ground, may possibly be designed to answer to the threefold Character of the *barren* Ground which we have spoke to before. SERM.
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For First, They which receive the Seed into good Ground are explained to be those who *understand it and keep it*, in opposition to those who received the Seed by *the Way Side* and immediately lost it. This then was designed to teach us, that in order to hear and receive the Word with Fruitfulness and Success, we must not only hear, but attend to it too, and fix it deeply and seriously in our Minds. We must not let our Hearts and Thoughts lie exposed, like the common Way, to every Passenger that happens to come by; nor suffer the next trifling or wicked Imagination to deface any good Impression we receive. For we are mistaken if we suppose that religious Truths convey themselves to our Understandings by any forcible Means, or by any Ways different from what other things do. No surely; it must be by a serious Application of Mind, by a careful Remembrance, and by frequent Reflection, that things spiritual and divine, as well as things common, must be fastened upon us. For

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GOD, who gives us reasoning Faculties, expects we should employ them in Matters of this Nature, as well as in others. Here then the Sower of *common* Grain differs something from the Sower of the *Word*: When the Husbandman sows his Seed in the Ground; it lies upon him still to cultivate and manure it: The Care of the Ground, as well as of the Seed, is incumbent upon him: And he must be as diligent in the Culture of the one, as in the Choice of the other. But, in the Seed of the *Word*, as the Ground that receives it, is able to act and do something of itself; whatever it can do, lies upon the Ground, and not the Sower, to perform. Hence it comes to pass, that with Relation to the Gospel, wherever the Sower has cast in his Grain, his Business as a Sower is there at an End. The covering up and cherishing diligently what is received, must be the Business of every Man particularly for himself.

But secondly, *They* (saith our blessed Lord) *who receive the Seed into good Ground, are they who bring forth the Fruits of it with Patience*; contrary to those who receive it into *Rocks and stony Ground*; i.e. who receive it only with sudden Expressions of Joy for a While; but in Time of Temptation fall away.

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This again is designed to instruct us, that to render the Word successful with us, we must not be contented with only hearing, and considering, and assenting to the Truth and Reasonableness of what is delivered and preached; but we must also with Patience and Perseverance apply ourselves to the Practice of what is taught, notwithstanding any Hardships, Difficulties or Discouragements to which it may expose us; that we must obey the Exhortations and Instructions that are given, not only where we can do it without putting any Curb upon our Interest or Desires; but also where it calls us to Acts of *Mortification*, *Self-denial* and *Restraint*; and even though it should lay us open to *Affliction* or *Persecution* for its Sake.

But lastly, To receive the Word with Success, we must keep it *in an honest and good Heart*, in Opposition to those who receive it *among Thorns*, and of whom it is observed that the *Cares of the World*, and the *Deceitfulness of Riches*, and the *Pleasures of Life* choke the Word, so that they bring no Fruit to Perfection. To cure which unhappy Disposition within us, we must be careful to receive the Word impartially, and with a full Resolution to give it an entire Power and Command

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mand over our Affections, Interest and Passions; to hear it with a Disposition ready and free to submit to the *whole* of whatever it teaches; to close with any Duty it recommends or makes known, though ever so disgusting, though ever so contrary to our Inclinations and Desires, to quit our Pleasure and our Profit whenever we understand they are not innocent, or consistent with the Duties we are taught; and sooner to sacrifice all the Delights and Advantages which this World can afford us, than to miss one ready, regular Step, which the Gospel directs us to take towards the next. This is the Temper which the *honest and good Heart* in the Parable means: And he that receives and cherishes the Word in such a Heart and Temper as this, need not doubt of bringing forth it's Fruit in Time to Perfection: Which is the proper Subject of the

IV. FOURTH Head of my Discourse, under which I am to shew *what Profit or Advantage* attends the Word when received and cherished as the Parable describes. *Other* (says the Text) *fell on good Ground, and sprang up, and bare Fruit an hundred fold.* And indeed wheresoever the Seed is good, and the Ground

Ground good ; what should hinder its being fruitful ? And if the Ground be prepared as it ought to be ; we never in this Case, ought to doubt of the Goodness of the Seed. For the Seed of the Word is of that Nature and Efficacy, as to force its Way, where there are no Lets or Impediments to hinder it. Where the Mind is in a fit Disposition to receive it ; where it diligently attends, seriously applies, and carefully retains ; there we may assuredly expect to see the Fruits of it soon springing up to our View. For how is it possible that such reasonable Precepts, such glorious Promises, such exceeding Rewards, as the Word of God, in every Book, in every Page, from the Beginning to the End, continually sets forth ; should fail of enflaming the Hearts of Men with eager Desires to believe and obtain ? And if these Desires be not again too soon allayed by the Sluggishness of our Nature, the Prevalency of our Passions, or a worldly Solitude ; what Fruits of Sobriety, Righteousness and Godliness ; in a Word, what Fruits of universal Holiness can they possibly miss of exciting in us here ; and in Consequence thereof what Fruits of Happiness and Glory must they infallibly obtain and secure to us hereafter ?

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And thus having gone through the Heads of my Discourse, I shall now endeavour to close up the whole, with a short Application in the

V. FIFTH and last Place and so conclude. And what our Saviour said to the People at the End of the Parable; the same, my Brethren, let me, I beseech you, say to you at the End of this Discourse and Illustration upon it. *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.* For the Parable is full as applicable to you, as it was to the *Jews* to whom our Saviour spake it. For every Preacher, in an inferior Degree, is a Sower of the Word; though every Sower is not, as he was, Master of the Field. And we are ready to own that there is no Comparison between the Master and the Servant; but that whilst both the Doctrine and Example of the one was perfect and entire, the Errors and Infirmities of the other are infinite. But yet had our Lord foreseen that any Failings or Mistakes of the Preacher would be any real or natural Cause of the Inefficacy of the Word; or that Instructions given from polluted Lips might endanger the Salvation of those that heard it; he would not surely have failed to give a Hint of it in the Parable. Depend

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pend upon it therefore, however unworthy ^{S E R M.}
or unequal to the Work the Preacher may be, ^{VIII.}
some Advantage you may still find by a dili-
gent Attendance and Listning to him. And
this indeed is the first Advancement towards
receiving the Seed : I mean the putting your-
selves in the Way where it is scattered and sown.
For otherwise if you are negligent and back-
ward to hear ; if through Slothfulness or Pre-
judice you absent yourselves when he preaches ;
if you are adjusting your Accounts or Things
of this World, when you should be listening
to those that concern the next ; or if you are
idling at home, or sauntering in the Fields
when your Call is to the Church ; then you are
sensible it is impossible you should improve by
any thing said there. In this Case you fall
short even of the first Sort of Hearers which
the Parable names : You don't so much as
come up to those who catch the Word *by the*
Way-side : Even *their* Case therefore is bet-
ter than yours : For though the Seed which
they receive is in Danger of being immediate-
ly *trodden* down or *devoured* ; yet still by
Chance a Corn or two may lay and continue
in the Ground, and produce here and there a
Blade to Perfection. You are therefore in-
dispensably bound to hear, if ever you hope

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to profit or improve. But you find by the Characters expressed in my Text that *bearing alone* is not sufficient, nor except you hear with due Dispositions and Temper of Mind: Since without a proper Precaution and Care, you will be in Danger of being numbered amongst those unhappy ones in the Text, who receiving the Seed *by the Way-side*, are never likely to bring forth Fruit. Give me Leave therefore to hope that when we see you here, it won't be meer Custom and Form that brings you; but that you come with a Desire to be edified and improved, and with a Resolution to practise as well as hear; that you won't look upon our Sermons as transitory Entertainments for half an Hour, but receive them as the Instructions of those who speak with Authority, requiring your Obedience for your whole Lives afterwards. And that they may not only require, but obtain it too, let me hope in the next Place, that you will use your Endeavours to clear the Ground, the Seed is to be sown on, from *Pebbles* and *Stones*; to rid your Hearts of Doubts and Fears, that the Seed may have Opportunity of taking sufficient Root within you, and not be exposed to be *scorched and burnt for Want of Earth enough to cover it*. To this End, let the
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Grounds and Reasons, upon which we shew your Faith is built, make such deep Impressions upon your Minds, that no Suggestions of the Adversaries to it may shake or impair it; nor any Inconveniencies, to which the Profession of it may expose you, frighten you from it. On the contrary, whatever you are persuaded is an Article of Faith, may you dare to profess in Times and Places, where Religion is discountenanced, as well as in those where it is acknowledged and owned; and may you put on Courage and Resolution sufficient to stand the Shock of a Laugh or a Frown, and not be bantered out of what you believe, because it is the Subject of a Fool's, I mean of a Rake's or a Fop's, Ridicule. And he indeed, who, in so slender a Trial, disclaims or forbears to maintain what he has been taught to hope and believe; what Judgment must we make of his Patience and Strength, should it e'er be tried by open Persecutions, where the *Sun* shines out in its full Force, and where, without abundant Moisture, the Seed must be dried up and scorched?

But not only *Rocks*, but *Briars* also and *Thorns*, (as you have learned from the Parable) are Hinderances to the Word; you will therefore again give me leave to hope, that

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these also it will be your Endeavour to root out and destroy ; that so neither your Cares nor your Riches, neither your Pleasures nor your Lusts, (all which I told you the Thorns denote) shall render any more the Seed unfruitful, and consequently all our Labour vain. But on the contrary I shall trust that when you shall return again to your Farms and your Trades, you won't let the Business and Concerns of this Life, drive from your Minds all Thoughts of the other : But rather let what we discourse to you of the next World, guide and direct you in the Affairs of this. Nor again will you suffer your Pleasures and Diversions, your Games and Sports, to obliterate the serious and weighty Instructions you receive from hence ; but rather permit the Instructions here given to restrain you from Diversions that cannot innocently be used, and to moderate your Indulgence in those that may. And without due Care in all these Points, the Seed that we sow will certainly be chok'd, and we shall have nothing but *Briars* and *Thorns* in its Room. But these, good Christians, are not what the Husbandman designs for his *Barn* ; but what he threatens to *pluck up and burn*. 'Tis the *good Seed* alone which he values and esteems, and even this only, as
it

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it shall appear in that Plenty, which the Na-
ture of the Ground shall give him Reason to
expect.

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For our Lord (in the parallel Place to my Text) is pleased to tell us that this is in some Places thirty fold, in some it is sixty, and in some an hundred. From whence we may infer that the Soil which yields *thirty fold* is allowed as good Ground, if it cannot be made capable of yielding more ; but if *thirty fold* be only brought forth, where there is a Capacity in the Ground to yield *sixty* or an *hundred*; there the thirty will be in Danger of not answering the Expectation of the Husbandman. It therefore lies on you, my Brethren, to endeavour that our Doctrine and Persuasions not only produce in you *good Fruit*; but also good Fruit *in Plenty and Abundance*. And how they may do so by the Help of the Divine Grace assisting with you ; and upon what Conditions that Grace may be attained, I have already told you. Let us then but add our own Prayers and Endeavours and the work is done. *And therefore that it may please THEE to give to all thy People Increase of Grace, to hear meekly thy Word, and to receive it with pure Affections, and to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit ;*

We beseech thee, to hear us, good Lord:

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For though Paul may plant, and Apollos
 water ; yet it is thou alone that canst give the
Encrease : From thee therefore we beg the Dew
 of thy heavenly Benediction and Grace, to
 descend always upon what is delivered, that
 it may be as good Seed sown on good Ground,
 and bring forth Fruit in thy Servants to Sal-
 vation. Let them be *Doers of the Word* and
 not *Hearers only, deceiving their own selves.*



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SERMON IX.

The Wheat and the Tares.

St. MAT. xiii. 30.

Let both grow together until the Harvest.

AMONGST many other very useful Instructions which our Lord most apparently intends by the Parable, of which my Text is a Part ; a main and principal one is evidently this ; *viz.* to represent to us the Necessity there is, that good and bad Men should live together promiscuously here, lest the Good, by an immediate Separation of the Wicked, should suffer greater Inconveniencies, than they would from their Continuance amongst them. In Order to this, our blessed Saviour represents an *Enemy sowing Tares in a Field* in which the *Householder* had sown *Wheat* before : At which the *Servants* of the *Householder* being much concerned, would have had the Orders of their Master to *pluck them up*. But the Master being afraid lest

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in

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in gathering the Tares, they should also root up the Wheat with them, he orders that both be suffered to grow together till the Harvest ; when he will order the Tares to be first gathered and bound up in Bundles for the Fire, and then the Wheat will be more securely gathered into his Barn. Now, as our Lord himself explains this Parable, the Tares sown by the Enemy, are the Wicked, which the Devil raises up in the Church or Kingdom of Christ, which Christ, who is the Householder, won't suffer to be separated whilst the World continues, for Fear the Righteous, who are the Wheat, should receive Damage from the Separation : But at the End of the World, which is the Time of Harvest, he will send forth his Angels, who are his Reapers, to gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend or that work Iniquity : And these he will order to be cast into a Furnace of everlasting Fire. But the Righteous he will take with him into the Kingdom of his Father, where they shall shine forth for ever as the Sun. This is the Sum and Substance of the Parable ; of which the Use I shall make, shall be to take Occasion from that Part of it, which I have read for my Text, to lay before you the Reasons why Providence continues a Mixture of

good

good and bad Men together in the State of SERM.
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the Church. For this we know to be a Dispensation of Providence that has perplexed and stagger'd many good Men. When the Innocent and Harmless are injured and oppressed by the Troublesome and Unjust, they find it very hard to forbear complaining with the Prophet, *Lord, wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy Tongue when the wicked devoureth the Man that is more righteous than he?* Hab. i. 13. Even holy *David*, when he found the Church tyrannized over by the Wicked, could not refrain from bursting out into that Complaint—*O Lord GOD, to whom Vengeance belongeth, thou GOD, to whom Vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. Arise thou Judge of the World, and reward the Proud after their deserving. Lord, how long shall the Ungodly, how long shall the Ungodly triumph? How long shall all wicked Doers speak so disdainfully, and make such proud boasting?* Ps. xciv. 1—4.

But not withstanding all the Prayers and Supplications of the Righteous, GOD never yet thought fit to give them a total Deliverance: So far indeed he has granted their Requests, as sometimes to rescue them from the *Power and Dominion* of the Ungodly: But
to

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to be entirely free from being vexed and troubled by them, is what we must never expect whilst this World continues. Whilst the Good and Bad are blended together, it is impossible but the one must suffer from the other : The Nature of Things requires it should be so : And there is no avoiding what is appointed and decreed. And therefore, since this is a Malady, which it necessarily lies upon us all to endure ; it may perhaps be some Ease and Satisfaction to us under it, to find upon Examination that it is reasonable and just. And in Hopes that we may do so ; I shall make it the Business of this Discourse to shew that in whatever Regard we are considered, whether, with Relation to GOD, to our Neighbour, or ourselves, it is both our Duty and Interest to acquiesce. In order to this, I shall range my Thoughts under three Particulars, and endeavour to prove that to desire a hasty or immediate Removal of the Wicked from amongst us, would

I. In the FIRST Place be an *Injury* to them :

II. SECONDLY, it would be a *Disadvantage* to the *Righteous* themselves : And

III. THIRDLY, it would be an *Encroachment* upon the *Sovereignty* of GOD.

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I. In the FIRST Place I observe it would SERM.
be an Injury to the *Wicked* : Because such a IX.
Removal of them, would be to deprive them
of that Time which GOD allows them to
grow better. For in this Respect the Case
of naughty Men, is happily different from
that of bad Seed. *Tares* will always be Tares ;
The Quality of them is by no Means alter-
able : Whereas bad Men may at length, by
the Grace of GOD, change their Nature, and
at last become good and profitable. It is the
Misfortune of *fallen Angels* only not to be
able to repent : Men, so long as they con-
tinue so, are still capable of Amendment.
The Examples of others, the Starts of their
own Consciences, a Fit of Sickness, and every
Judgment that stops short of their utter Ruin,
is an awakening Call and a fresh Motive to
Repentance. And we sometimes see the most
profligate Sinners reclaimed by some or other
of these Methods. Nor are they, any less
than the best of Men, entituled to the Means
of Grace and Salvation : Those only excepted
who refuse all Offers and Calls, and so through
their own Obstinacy become finally rejected.
But otherwise, as bad Men as well as good
are the Sons of *Adam* ; so have they the same
Right

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Right to the Benefits obtained by Christ. The Sacrifice he offered was an Atonement for all Mankind : Nor are any Sins so great, but that still his Blood is sufficient to expiate them. The oldest Sinner, and the hardiest too, if he embrace the Terms of the Covenant at last, has a Claim to the Reward proposed in it. And therefore as plucking up by the Roots, and casting into the Fire cannot become a Master of a Vineyard, till all other Experiments have been made Use of to no Purpose ; so it would ill agree with the Attributes of God, who is wise and good, as well as holy and just, to give his Creatures over to Destruction, before they have proved themselves absolutely incurable.

Some People perhaps may here object that God undoubtedly foresees that a great Part of the wicked, notwithstanding all the Offers of Grace he makes to them, will still persist in their Impiety and Sin, and that therefore his Continuance of them tends only to the Disquiet and Oppression of the Righteous, without any Prospect that the wicked will be amended : And that consequently God's Removal of them would be a Means to redress the Injuries of the Good, and prevent the Bad from enhancing their Guilt. In answer to this,

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this, it would be sufficient to observe that ^{SERM.}
God generally governs the World so, that ^{IX.}
Men may be able to justify his Goodness: He
would have all to see and observe that he de-
lighteth not in the Death of a Sinner, but had
rather that he would turn from his Sin and
be saved. But not to insist upon this; ano-
ther Reason may be given for God's sparing
the wicked even for their own sakes, though
he foresees and foreknows that they will never
amend. For though the longer they live,
they become the more removed from Heaven,
they may notwithstanding have some specious
Pretence to the Enjoyment of this Life. For
there is scarce any Man so desperately aban-
doned to Wickedness, as not to have some
commendable Quality, some Acts of a better
Kind to temper and allay the Venom of his
bad ones. And if so; both Reason and Re-
ligion will instruct us, that it becomes a holy
and just Judge to award a Recompence in Pro-
portion to each Man's Desert: But a few
moral Virtues, where the momentous Duties
of Religion are despised, can never merit the
Reward of Heaven: Nor do such Men either
relish or desire the Joys and Happiness of a
spiritual State: But provided they can com-
pass the Satisfaction of this World, neglect

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and despise all future Advantages. And for this Reason does God proceed with such People, not only in the Method of Justice strictly considered; but also by complying with their own Wishes and Inclinations. If at the summoning up of the Account, this be found not to answer Expectation; they have none but their own Folly to thank for it; they have the Reward which they proposed to themselves, and therefore they can by no Means accuse the Justice of God.

But the Method and Heads I have proposed for my Discourse call on me to shew that the Continuance of bad Men is not only an Act of Justice to themselves, but that it is also many Ways beneficial to the Good. I shall therefore proceed to observe in the

II. SECOND Place, that a hasty Removal of the Wicked from the World, would, as the State of the World now stands, be *disadvantageous* to the *Righteous* themselves. For in the present Condition of human Affairs, it is impossible even for GOD to take an immediate Vengeance upon the Wicked, without sensibly afflicting the Good and Righteous. For as the Roots of the Tares are so entangled with those of the good Seed, that the one

cannot be disengaged without plucking up ^{S E R M.} the other ; so are the Interests and Relations ^{IX.} of good and bad Men so mutually mixed and interwoven, that it is absolutely impossible that any Inconveniencies should happen to the one, which shall not very nearly affect the other also. — As Things are now, the Guilty cannot suffer in themselves alone, but the Circumstances of the Innocent will through their means be brought at least into Confusion and Disorder. A debauched Husband or unfaithful Wife, an unnatural Parent or undutiful Child, cannot now be overtaken by an immediate Vengeance without mutually involving one another in Trouble and Grief. The Thoughts of losing to Eternity a near Relation, whom the Ties of Blood or Affinity have made dear, cannot sure but be a great Affliction to those he leaves behind, notwithstanding they may be freed from the greatest Difficulties and Oppressions by his Death. For by how much the better Christians they are who survive ; by so much the greater will be their Grief : It being the Nature of Religion to soften our Hearts, and to fill them with Tenderness and Compassion. — So that even this Consideration alone would be sufficient to shew, how great a

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Mercy it is even to the Righteous that the Wicked are spared and not immediately punished.

But if we will go on to pursue the Subject a little further, we shall find that such sparing them, is not only an Ease to the *outward* Circumstances and *inward* Pity and Passions of good Men; and consequently that it not only conduces to their Welfare and quiet *here*; but that it is also a Means of advancing the Righteous in their *spiritual* Affairs, and of helping them forward in their Attainment of Happiness and Bliss *hereafter*. It cannot indeed be said that Virtue receives any real or intrinsic Value from the Redundance of Vice, because Men are to walk not by Example but Rule. And therefore how far soever the Generality of Mankind may depart from that Rule, we are never the less obliged to live up to it ourselves. But yet it must be owned that Virtue is beholden to Vice for its Lustre and Force, since the Cruelty and Malice of wicked Men awaken its Powers, render the Examples of it more illustrious, and so in the Event exalt and beautify, whilst their Intention is to darken and suppress it. — Were there not bad Men in the World to minister Occasions, good Men would

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would have no Opportunity of exercising their most shining Virtues. Were there no *Injuries* offered, there would be no need of *Forgiveness*: Nor could *Love* be returned for *Hatred*, were there none to prosecute with *Malice* and *Revenge*. The *praying for our Enemies*, and *blessing them that curse us*, would be only *nominal* Duties and find no Room for Practice. And yet it is the Exercise of these Virtues that distinguishes the Christian, and renders him most like to his heavenly Father. And therefore without Doubt it is the Benefit and Advantage of his Children that God designs by continuing a Mixture of good and bad Men together. It is the Tyranny of these in the World, that helps forward the Triumphs of the others in the next. Inasmuch that the brightest Crowns, that shall then be worn, will in some Measure be owing to the worst of Men. *The glorious Company of the Apostles, the goodly Fellowship of the Prophets, and the noble Army of Martyrs* are almost all of them beholden to the *Merciless and Cruel*, for those glorious Stations they shall one Day enjoy in Heaven. They would doubtless shine in a far lower Orb, had not the Inhumanity and Blood-thirstiness of their Persecutors entituled them to much higher

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Spheres. — To go further still, the very *Redemption of Mankind* by our blessed Saviour, and that most perfect Pattern of all Goodness which he set us, is a Consequence of the Mixture we are now speaking of: *Judas's Treachery*, the false Witness of suborned *Pharisees*, *Pilate's* Cowardice, and the unrelenting Cruelty of an inflamed *Rabble*, all contributed to the great Work of our Salvation, and were instrumental in the procuring us that great Example of Meekness and Humility, of Patience and Submission, of Forgiveness of our Enemies, and praying for our Murderers, which otherwise our blessed Lord would have had no Opportunities of shewing.

But not only these great and heroick Examples of our Lord and his eminent Martyrs and Saints: But the Exercise of our Virtue in *every Degree and Kind* whatever must in some Measure take its Rise from wicked Men. So that without a Mixture of wicked Men amongst us, we should be so far from being able to compass the *highest* Degrees or Seats in Heaven; that we should scarce have Opportunity of obtaining the *lowest* Forms or Mansions there. For Heaven is open to none but those, who first stand a Trial to shew they are worthy of it: And to make this Trial, Temptations to Wicked-

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Wickedness, and to Apostacy from the Com-
mands and Laws of GOD, are so absolutely
necessary to be thrown in our Way; that
when there was but one Couple in the World
and never another to try them; GOD saw it
fit to permit the Devil, *i. e.* the Devil him-
self in Person, to assault them. Since that
indeed the Devil has had no great Occasion to
attempt Mankind so immediately by himself:
He can do his Work through Men them-
selves, who are Tempters sufficient to one
another. But though *Tempters to Evil*, it is
our own Fault, if they prove not in the E-
vent, *Instruments of our Good*. For the more
and greater Temptations they endeavour to
throw in our Way; the more and greater Op-
portunities they afford us (if we manage them
well) to shew our Virtue and Manifest our
Faith. Thus the *Chastity of Joseph* (to give
one Instance only, where many might be
brought; I say the *Chastity of Joseph*) had
never been known had not the Lewdness of
his Mistress given him Occasion to exert it.
But when she sollicit, and he resists, the
Patriarch is proved, the Trial is made, and
the Victory gained. To enter upon his Re-
ward he must pass through the Prison indeed,
the Emblem of the Grave: But even there

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the Lord is with him to comfort and support him; and as soon as the Time of his Deliverance is come, we find him advanced to the Right Hand of the King.

And this, I presume, is sufficient to shew that as our desiring a hasty Removal of the Wicked would in some Measure be an Act of Injustice to themselves; so would it also be *disadvantageous* to the *Righteous*: Over and above which I am to observe in the

III. THIRD Place, that such a Desire would be also an Encroachment upon the *Sovereignty of GOD*. For he has promised that at the Time of *Harvest* the Tares and the Wheat shall be entirely separated: And therefore it does not become us to murmur, because they are not already severed. We may depend upon it, it will be done in convenient Time, and as soon as Matters shall be thoroughly ripe for it; But to complain of Delays, and to call out for the *Reapers* when we think fit, is to invade the Privilege and Prerogative of the Householder. The *Field* is his, and the *Seed* his; and therefore his also is the sole Right to determine the *Time of gathering*. And when that comes, I am persuaded that neither the one will have any

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Satisfaction from standing together so long, nor the other complain of not being separated sooner. *A Worm that dieth*, and *a Fire, unquenchable* (how late soever they may begin) are a Vengeance sufficient for the greatest Oppression and Wrong: And a *never fading Crown of Glory* (though it were not to be received till Millions of Ages hence) would yet come Time enough to recompence the longest Life of Sufferings and Contempt. For since Punishment and Rewards, when once they begin, must both last for ever; though Ages of Ages were still to pass before they commenced, yet what a Trifle, what a Moment will all those Ages appear, compared with that unmeasurable Eternity that must succeed? From these Considerations therefore we cannot but infer, what an Injury we offer to the Goodness, the Justice, and the Sovereignty of God, when we either envy the continued Prosperity of the Wicked, or think ourselves not timely enough delivered from their Ill-usage, Insolence and Tyranny.

And thus having gone through the several Heads of my Discourse, and having shewn it to be our Interest as well as our Duty, to bear with bad Men; I shall now endeavour, in very few Words, to apply the whole, by

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shewing what Influence, the Consideration of these Points ought to have upon our Practice.

And here I shall hope that my Application to you all may be one and the same: I would willingly persuade myself that in this Field, or Enclosure, the Seed is all good, and consequently I would speak to you in a Language that is adapted rather to Wheat than to Tares. It is true, as the Abundance of Tares enhances the Price of the good Seed; so I have shewn that the worst of Men are of Use to call forth and to distinguish the best. Since it is to these that the best Men are indebted for the Trial and Proof of their Virtue, which sets them beyond the Rank of those who have no such Trials to undergo. In this Way therefore I again repeat, that wicked Men are continually of signal Use to the Good: But then they are of Use to them, just in such a Manner as the Devil is, they mount them to Heaven, by the Rebound with which they escape their Attempts to draw them to Hell. — A Reflection, one would think, that if the worst of Men could but once have thought enough to make, they would despise and loath themselves for the Part they carry on and act in the World: Damning themselves certainly by their At-

tempts to damn and ruin others, and plung-
ing themselves still into deeper Damnation by
every Design and Attempt that succeeds:
Since every conquest they gain will most as-
suredly hereafter hang about them like a
Load, and the Sins of others being added to
their own, shall sink them so much lower in
Proportion, into the bottomless Lake of Brim-
stone and Fire. But let us, my Brethren,
chuse to humble them another Way: Let us
not enhance their own Guilt and Torments,
by laying ours at their Door; lest by being
prevailed on to comply with their Sins, we
share in their Punishment. But rather let us
disappoint and mortify the Designs, by rising
as high proportionably in Virtue, as they
would sink us in Vice; and climb to Heaven
by those Cords of Vanity and Sin, which they
make Use of as Instruments to draw us to
Hell. And if we can keep ourselves thus free
and clear from their Allurements and Temp-
tations; we shall easily know in what Man-
ner to behave ourselves with Regard to the
Injuries and Oppressions they lay on us.
For we shall only have Occasion for Patience
and Forbearance, which by a Soul good-na-
tured and well-disposed are not difficult to be
obtained. For since the Design of Provi-
dence

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dence in continuing the Wicked in the World, is to bring them to Repentance, it certainly behoves us to forward that Design (as far as in us lies) by affording them the Benefit of our good Advice and pious Examples. If, notwithstanding all our Endeavours, they continue obstinate, and to misemploy the Time God graciously allows them; Be it to themselves: We have done our Parts, and therefore the Miscarriage cannot be laid at our Doors.—— We are only to be careful not to repine at God's Forbearance of them, nor to envy them their present Prosperity and Happiness: The greatest Enjoyment this World can afford, being but a poor Exchange for the Loss of Eternity. And therefore since they chuse their good Things here, let us commiserate their Choice, but not think them too happy.—— Should they at last return us Evil for Good, and load us with Reproaches for our sincere Endeavours; —— All we have to do is to bear it with Patience, and to remember that though a universal Reformation of Mankind, in this State of the World, is what we can never hope for; — yet to make our Advantage from the Wickedness of others is what is in our Power.—— And what can a Christian desire more? — It should be, methinks,

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thinks, a sufficient Consolation under the greatest Oppression and Wrong, to consider that whilst our Enemies are endeavouring to depress us, they only afford us Opportunities of rising higher. — It must indeed be owned that these are Trials and Temptations, and that therefore if we do not withstand them, we fall: But still we have the Comfort to know that, provided we resist them for a while, they cannot last for ever: But that when all things are ripe a Harvest will ensue, and that a Time is coming when all Mankind shall have abundant Reason to join in that celestial Song of *Moses and the Lamb*, — *Great and Marvellous are thy Works, Lord GOD Almighty, just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints*, Rev. xv. 3.

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S E R M O N X.

The Usefulness, Authority, and Effect
of Preaching.

Preached at an Ordination at St. Paul's, &c.

ROM. x. 14, 15, 16.

*How shall they hear without a
Preacher?*

*And how shall they preach, except they be sent?
As it is written, How beautiful are the
Feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace,
and bring glad Tidings of good Things!*

*But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For
Isaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our
Report?*

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THE Heads which I propose to draw
from these Words requiring as much
Time as I dare presume will be allowed me
(from the ensuing Solemnity) and as I have
only Occasion to treat of them at present as they
stand

stand separately by themselves, without examining the Relation they bear to the Context; I shall not detain you with any Introduction concerning the Occasion of them, but proceed immediately to observe four Things which they obviously point out to us, *viz.*

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I. FIRST, That it is the unspeakable Favour of GOD, that in communicating to us his Mind, and in revealing his Will, he makes use of the Ministry of *Men like unto ourselves.* *How shall they bear without a Preacher?*

II. SECONDLY, That lest these Men, by being *like ourselves*, should want *Authority* to enforce the Word they preach, he has thought fit to dignify them with a *Divine Commission*, thereby to separate and distinguish them from the rest of Mankind. *How shall they preach, except they be sent?*

III. THIRDLY, That notwithstanding both these things, *viz.* though those who preach the Gospel are *Men like ourselves*, and so have nothing of *Terror* in them to frighten Men from hearing them; and yet are dignified with a *Divine Commission*, and so want no *Authority* to persuade Men; yet their Preaching

SERM. ing has not that *due Effect* it ought to have.

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They have not all obeyed the Gospel; for Isaias says, Lord, who hath believed our Report?

IV. FOURTHLY, That though Preaching be generally so unsuccessful; yet there still is, and ever will be, *sufficient Encouragement*, for Ministers to be instant in preaching the Word. *For how beautiful are the Feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad Tidings of good Things!*

I. FIRST, I am to observe that it is the unspeakable Favour of GOD, that in communicating to us his Mind, and in revealing his Will, he makes use of the Ministry of Men, *like unto ourselves*. And this I observe from those Words in the Text, *How shall they bear without a Preacher?* A Question that plainly implies, that unless the Word be preached unto us by the Ministry of Man, we must continue in Ignorance; having no other Means of coming to the Knowledge of it. Not that it is impossible for GOD to communicate it to us himself, either by a Voice from Heaven, or by the Ministry of an Angel, or after some other extraordinary Manner: But because the preaching of it by Man is the only Method he has

ever

ever made use of in revealing it to Mankind. S E R M.
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We cannot but observe, that as this was an Institution of his own Appointment, so it is a Means he has always confined himself to, as well upon *extraordinary* as *ordinary* Occasions. I do not mean by this that God never revealed his Will immediately to Man: For that must necessarily be supposed; since they who were the first Declarers of it to the World, could be instructed in it themselves no otherwise than from Heaven. And therefore though God has made known his Mind to some as it were by *Word of Mouth*, to others by *Visions*, and *Dreams*, and to others again by the secret *Whisperings* of his Holy Spirit; yet this is no Objection to the Position laid down; since they, who were thus thought worthy of such extraordinary Revelations, were no others than those whom God raised up to be Ministers of his Word, and to whom he revealed it in this Manner, on Purpose that they should be Messengers of it to the People. So that such immediate Revelations made to particular Men, is itself an Argument that whenever God thinks fit to communicate his Will to a People or Nation, or to the whole Body of Mankind in general; he judges no Instrument so proper to convey it by as the Mouths of their Fellow Creatures.

Nor

Nor has this Method been made Use of by him, only as adapted to this or that particular Dispensation ; but is an Institution that commenced from the Fall of Man, and such as will continue till his Consummation in Glory. In the *Ante-diluvian* World, when the *Spirit of GOD* had for a long Time strove with the Sons of Men, he raised up Noah, a Preacher of Righteousness, as the last and likeliest Means to reclaim them, Gen. vi. compared with 2 Pet. ii. 5. After the Flood, when the Earth was again overspread by the Sons of Noah, GOD chose to himself a particular Family, the Holy Patriarchs, those lively Examples of Faith and Righteousness, whom he appointed and stilled his Prophets and his Anointed, Gen. xx. 7. Psalm cv. 15. making them as it were itinerant Preachers of his Word, whithersoever they went. After this again, when the Lord selected the Children of Israel to be a peculiar Treasure to him above all People, and constituted them a Kingdom of Priests, and an Holy Nation, Exod. xix. 5, 6. yet even these were not permitted to receive the Word from GOD himself ; but Moses only was called up to the Mount, and to him alone GOD gave the Law, making him the Instrument of

of conveying it to the People. See *Exod.* ^{SERM.}
 xix. 20, &c. In the Body of which, as all ^{X.}
 other Things were provided for which tend-
 ed to the Good of Mankind, or the Worship
 of GOD; so particular Instruments were giv-
 en for expounding the Word, which was
 made the peculiar Office of the *Priests* and
Levites, Levit. x. xi. Deut. xvii. 9, 10.
 xxiv. 8. xxxiii. 10. And when these fail-
 ed in their Duty, GOD raised up those extra-
 ordinary Messengers of his Word, the *Pro-*
phets, by whom, as the holy Penman tells
 us, he *at sundry Times, and in divers Man-*
ners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers,
 Heb. i. 1. And when these again could not
 prevail, GOD saw there was Occasion for a
 more powerful Preacher; and therefore the
Fullness of Time being come, the *Son of GOD*
himself must descend from Heaven, and be-
 come the Minister of his own Word. But
oh! the Depth of the Riches of the Wisdom
and Knowledge of GOD! Behold the *Son*
of GOD, first to qualify himself for the Of-
 fice he had undertaken, clothed himself in
 Flesh and Blood, and so became the *Son of*
Man. And thus in the Likeness of Man, he
 gave the World his new Law, the Precepts
 of the Gospel; for the Promulgation of which

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he provided, just before his Ascension, by appointing his Apostles to *go and teach it to all Nations*, Matt. xxviii. 19. These in Obedience to his Word, dispersed themselves all over the World, and by Virtue of their Preaching it was, and of others sent by them, that *as many as were ordained to Life, believed*, Acts xxxiii. 48. Insomuch that though some, through the peculiar Grace of God, were, by the secret Whisperings of the Holy Spirit, first inwardly moved to receive the Word; yet Man was still, by the same Grace of God, the constant Instrument of conveying it to them. Thus when the *Æthiopian Eunuch* was reading *Esaias's* Prophecy with a Desire to understand it, *Philip* was sent to him by the Spirit to expound it, Acts viii. 27, &c. whereas the same Spirit, that had disposed him to read it, could doubtless have enlightened him to understand it, had not the Wisdom of God thought the Evangelist a properer Minister for that Office. Thus again, in the wonderful Conversion of *St. Paul*, though the *Lord Jesus himself* vouchsafed to call him, yet he sent him to *Ananias* to know what he should do, Acts ix. And though an *Angel* was sent from Heaven, to testify to *Cornelius* his Acceptance with

GOD;

GOD; yet he had no Commission to instruct SERM. X. him in the Faith; but *Simon Peter* must be sent for to perform that Office, *Acts x.* But I need not tire you with Instances of this Nature: I shall only just observe to you once for all, that as this Institution *ever has been* the constant Method of GOD's conveying his Word to us; so the Apostle assures it *ever will be*, till the Consummation of all Things. For he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting (or rather for the fitting out) of the Saints to the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of GOD, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ, Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13.

Having thus proved the *Fact*, viz. that GOD, in communicating to us his Mind, and in revealing his Word, makes Use of the Ministry of Man like unto ourselves; I shall now proceed to shew that this is an *unspeakable Favour*.

Had Man indeed retained his Innocence and Integrity; to have conversed with GOD would have been his greatest Happiness. His whole Nature would have been conformable

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to the Divine Will, and his chief Delight to imitate the Perfections of his Creator. This must consequently have rendered the Presence of the Deity a desirable Blessing, since it is natural to covet the Presence of those we love and imitate. So that God himself would have been the Messenger of his own Laws, and at once have encouraged and quickened our Obedience. But this, to our Grief and Shame, is only reflecting upon a Happiness, once in our Power, but now forfeited and lost: The Case is otherwise, and Man is fallen: Who no sooner became conscious of Disobedience and Guilt, but he found his whole Nature alienated from his original Purity, and transformed from the Image of his Maker. The natural Consequence of which must be, that Man, thus deformed, must shun the Presence of a perfect and glorious Deity; thus conscious of Guilt and Shame, must avoid the Wrath of an angry Judge. And therefore when our first Parents became sensible of their *Nakedness*, no wonder that they endeavoured to *bide themselves from the Presence of the Lord*, Gen. iii. 8. Nor is it at all difficult to account, why the same Dread of the Divine Majesty that first seized *Adam*, should still hold

hold Possession of his Posterity; since we ^{S E R M.} can't but know, that so long as the Guilt is ^{X.} transmitted down, the Horror of it must accompany it. And Sense of this therefore it was, that filled *Jacob* with Admiration, that, after he had *seen GOD Face to Face*, his *Life should be preserved*, Gen. xxxii. 30. To this also it was owing that *Hagar*, Gen. xvi. 13. and *Gideon*, Judg. vi. 22, 23. and *Manoah*, Judg. xxxiii. 22. were each of them under Apprehensions of *Death*, upon *seeing the Lord*. Nor need we be surprized that the *Children of Israel*, when they had heard the Voice of the Lord, *intreated that the Word might not be spoken to them*, after that Manner, *any more*, Exod. xx. 19. compared with Heb. xii. 19. when the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* tells us, that even *Moses* (whom the Lord favoured so much as to *speake to him Face to Face, as a Man speaketh to his Friend*, Exod. xxxiii. 11.) yet found *the Sight so terrible, that he said, I exceedingly fear and quake*, Heb. xii. 19, 21. If then God's communicating his Will either by *himself* or an *Angel*, be thus dreadful and astonishing; how much ought we to adore his Goodness for making Use of the Ministry of *Man*! For did he not vouchsafe to give

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us Laws to walk by, we should be miserable Wretches indeed : And though he gave us Laws, yet were his Method of conveying them to us either by a Voice or a Messenger from Heaven, we should forego the Blessing to avoid the Means : But as he has made *Man* the Minister, we have all the Comforts and Advantages of his Word, without the Dread of his Appearance.

And as we are thus free from all Apprehensions from the *Ministers* of the Word ; so are we secure by the same Means, that no more of the *Word itself* will be imposed upon us than we shall be able to *bear*. Were it indeed the Office of *superior* Agents, of Beings unacquainted with the Clogs and Hindrances of Flesh and Blood, to expound the Rules of our Obedience ; we might reasonably fear that through Ignorance of our Weakness, they would interpret it in too strict a Sense for the Capacity of our human Frame. But this Fear we are delivered from by the good Providence of God, who has appointed no others to explain his Laws to us, than such as are themselves obliged to walk by those Laws, and under the same Impediments as those they preach to ; and consequently such as will give no other Interpretation of his Word, than

than what human Nature, under all it's In-^{S E R M.}
firmities, may readily comply with. And ^{X.}
therefore as the Apostle notes it to be our
particular Advantage, that *we have not an
High Priest, which cannot be touched with
the Feeling of our Infirmities, but who was in
all Points tempted like as we are,* Heb. iv.
15. so should we account it no less than an
inexpressible Benefit, that those, who are the
Stewards and Dispensers of his Word, are
Men sensible of the same Failings with our-
selves, and equally depressed with the In-
cumbrances of a depraved Nature.

Nor must we omit still another Advantage
accruing from this Institution of God's re-
vealing his Mind by the Ministry of Man;
and that is the Easiness of being informed in
the Will of God, of knowing what it is he
commands and requires of us. Were all our
Instructions to be given immediately from
Heaven; as often as we wavered in any Un-
certainties, we should be uneasy for a new
Messenger from thence to resolve our Doubts.
And though God, through his infinite Mer-
cy, has given us the *Scriptures* to be a *stand-
ing Rule*, whereby to conform our Lives;
yet they are not without their *Δυσνόητα*,
Things hard to be understood, which, without

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some supernatural Assistance, they that are unlearned and unstable, would wrest to their own Destruction, 2 Pet. iii. 16. And even in the plainer Texts of Scripture, when applied to a Man's own Case, some Scruples may arise, which his natural Propensity to favour himself, may make him unfit to resolve. But now by this gracious Institution Provisions are made for all these Exigencies. For as by the Ministry of Men he has given a Rule of Life for the Use of Men; so is the Sense and Meaning of that Rule, to be sought for of no other than Men: To the end that the Ignorant may know where to apply for Instruction, the Doubtful for Satisfaction, the Penitent for Pardon, and all Mankind for the Interpretation of the Word. Which, as it is now administered, is (as Moses said of the Law) not hidden from us, neither is it far off; It is not in Heaven, that we should say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the Sea, that we should say, Who shall go over the Sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the Word is very nigh unto us,—that we may hear it and do it, Deut. xxx.

II—14.

Thus

Thus have I shewed in some Measure the Benefits and Advantages accruing to Mankind from God's revealing to us his Will by the Ministry of Man. I shall therefore add no more on this Head, than to observe to you by Way of Inference, the horrid *Impiety* of some Men, who, because God has been so gracious as to communicate to them his Word after so familiar a Manner, *set at Nought* his Institution, and even renounce the *Word itself* for the Sake of it's *Ministers*. Can any thing be more ungrateful as well as wicked and profane, than for those, for whose Sakes this Institution was appointed, and even at their own Requests, to despise and condemn it? We find it upon Record that it was the unanimous Desire of the Children of *Israel* to *Moses*, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not GOD speak with us, lest we die*, *Exod. xx. 19.* From whence we may learn that the Ministry of Man was once thought a Blessing; why then should the Continuance of it render it mean and despicable? Are Men better prepared now to meet God himself? Or is it because we have no further Occasion to hear from him at all? Neither of these may be granted. For as to the first; the Appearance of an

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Angel only, has through all Ages put Mankind to the same Fear and Dread; and therefore how would they be able to sustain themselves in the Presence of the *Almighty*? And as to the latter, there is still the same Occasion for instructing the Ignorant, for reclaiming the Vicious, for strengthening the Weak, for confirming the Strong, for quickening the Slothful, for encouraging the Timorous, for composing the Scrupulous, and for satisfying the Doubtful. And how shall all this be done, but by applying to them the Word by the Ministry of Man? This is the Means God has appointed to be used on such Occasions, and therefore we are not to look now for the Miracle of a peculiar and extraordinary Assistance: Much less may they expect it who affront and trample upon his ordinary Institutions. It is true indeed, Those who are appointed Preachers of the Word are no other than Men, than Men of like Passions and Failings with ourselves: But still they have the Honour to bear a nearer Relation to God, whose immediate Servants or Ministers they are. A Character, one would think, that should not render them less worthy of Regard, since it is a natural Consequence of it, that to set at Nought their Ministrations,

or

or to make light of their Doctrine, is not so ^{S E R M.}
much an Injury to them, as it is an Affront ^{X.}
to their Master. The Words they utter, so
long as they explain or enforce the Scriptures,
are such as they are commanded by GOD to
preach; and therefore the Dishonour redounds
to him, if they are not received with Atten-
tion and Obedience. For our Saviour told
his Disciples, *He that beareth you, beareth
me*, and that the Neglect of hearing them,
would be a Contempt not so much to them,
as to himself and his Father. *For he, (saith
our Saviour) that despiseth you, despiseth me;
and he, that despiseth me, despiseth him that
sent me*, Luke x. 16. But this naturally
leads me to the next Head of my Discourse,
under which I am to observe,

II. SECONDLY, That lest the Ministers
of the Word, by being *Men*, like ourselves,
should want Authority to enforce the Word
they preach, GOD has thought fit to digni-
fy them with a *Divine Commission*, and there-
by to separate and distinguish them from the
rest of Mankind. And here it will be ne-
cessary in the first Place to observe, that, as
it may be reasonably expected, that Ministers
of the Word should be able to prove that
they

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they act by God's Authority, even to the Satisfaction of those they preach to; so have those who have been duly commissioned been always able to give Evidence of such Authority. This Evidence indeed has been different as the Occasion has required: For whenever God has made Use of any extraordinary Messengers, either to foretel any signal Mercy, or to denounce any sudden Judgment, or to be the Authors of a new Dispensation; he has impowered them to prove their Mission by external Signs and Wonders. Thus *Moses*, and thus *Christ*, who came, each of them, to establish a new Law, first shewed their Divine Commission by the Finger of God. And the Prophets, when they foretold any signal Mercy or Judgment not before revealed, either left the Event of their Prediction to shew the Truth of their Mission, or, if there was Occasion for it, made Use of a Miracle. But at other Times, when God has given Men a *standing Rule* to walk by, and has appointed an *ordinary Course* of Ministers to interpret it to the People; these Ministers, being not to make any new Revelation, but only to expound a Law already given, have no Occasion to work fresh Miracles to prove their Commission, but

but only to be able to shew by that Law it-^{S E R M.}
 self, that they are the Persons appointed to ^{X.}
 preach it to the People. Thus when the
 Law of *Moses* was given to the *Israelites*, it
 was made a perpetual Ordinance of that Law,
 that *Aaron* and *his Sons*, after him *should teach*
the Children of Israel all the Statutes which
the Lord had spoken unto them by the Hand of
Moses, Levit. x. 11. So that their Com-
 mission to teach and expound the Law was
 attested sufficiently, without further Evidence,
 by the Law itself. And so again when our
Saviour introduced a new Religion, and gave
 us the Gospel to walk by; he appointed the
 Apostles, and those that should regularly de-
 rive their Commission from them, by a spi-
 ritual Generation, to be the ordinary Mini-
 sters of it, *even to the End of the World*,
 Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. And this general Com-
 mission being by his Command recorded in
 the Gospel itself; they that so derive their
 Authority to preach the Word, can give as
 convincing Evidence of their Mission (to those
 I mean who believe the Gospel) as if they
 could prove it by Signs and Wonders. Nor
 is it any Objection, that the Apostles *worked*
Miracles to prove their Mission, notwith-
 standing the Authority of the Gospel that they

re-

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received it directly from Christ himself; because those whom the Apostles preached to, were such as had never heard of, or at least acknowledged, our Saviour; and consequently such as the Gospel was not known to. And therefore we may very reasonably suppose, that before any People or Nation would receive a new Religion, which quite overthrew or destroyed their old one, they would demand some extraordinary Proof of the Truth of that Religion which was proposed in the Room of it. So that in Reality, the End of the Apostles working Miracles, was not so much to prove they had received their Commission from Christ, as to prove that Christ himself, who sent them, was no Impostor; but that, though *the unknown*, he was yet the *true GOD*. Whereas with us the Case is quite different. We believe in Christ as our Saviour, and have received the Gospel as his Word: And therefore since that informs us that they who derive their Commission by Succession from the Apostles, and so from *Him*, are by *Him* empowered to preach the Word; we are not to demand any extraordinary Test of their Mission, but to acquiesce under the general Proof which the Gospel gives of their Authority. Since therefore
their

their Commission is so evident and undeniable; and since the Scriptures affirm in express Terms that GOD has committed unto them the Word of Reconciliation, and that they are Ambassadors for Christ, as though GOD did beseech you by them, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. there needs no further Argument to shew that, though the Ministers of GOD are Men of like Passions and Failings with yourselves, yet they want no Authority to enforce the Word they preach.

But the Text implies a great deal more: and that is, that none are qualified to preach the Word without Authority. For the Question here asked, (*How shall they preach except they be sent?*) plainly intimates that Preaching is an *Act of Authority*, not to be undertaken, but by such as are especially commissioned thereunto. But here we must observe, that it is one Thing to interpret the Scripture in a private Way, and to instruct the Ignorant in the Meaning of it, according to the best of one's Capacity, when Opportunities shall offer, and Occasions require; and another to take upon one's Self the Function of preaching and explaining the Gospel publickly and with Authority. The first of these is not only lawful and commendable, but

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but what is incumbent upon every Man, especially upon those who have the Care of Children, or Servants, or others under them. The other is unlawful and sacrilegious, and what Ranks such as are guilty of it amongst those false Prophets which GOD complains of to *Jeremiah, that he had not sent them, and yet they ran*, Jer. xxiii. 21.

“ I own indeed that those Words may be
 “ meant of a distinct and new Message, and
 “ that they were spoken of such Prophets as
 “ pretended a new Doctrine, for which they
 “ had no Commission from GOD. But which
 “ way soever they be expounded, they will
 “ conclude right in this particular. For if
 “ they signify an *ordinary* Mission; then
 “ there is an ordinary Mission of Preachers,
 “ which no Man must usurp, unless he can
 “ clearly prove his Title to be derived from
 “ GOD. But if they signify an *extraordinary*
 “ Case, and that no Message may be pre-
 “ tended by Prophets, but what they have
 “ Commission for; then must not ordinary
 “ Persons pretend an extraordinary Commis-
 “ sion to an ordinary Purpose. For it is
 “ very plain from all the Dispensations of his
 “ Providence, that GOD will never endure
 “ that Order should be interrupted to no Pur-
 “ pose;

“ pose ; and consequently that he will never ^{S E R M.}
 “ give an extraordinary Commission unless it ^{X.}
 “ be to a proportionable End. Whosoever
 “ therefore pretends to a Licence of Preach-
 “ ing by Virtue of an extraordinary Calling,
 “ must see that he be furnished with an ex-
 “ traordinary Message, lest his Commission
 “ be thought ridiculous. And when he
 “ comes, he must be sure to shew his Au-
 “ thority by an Argument proportionable,
 “ i.e. by such a Proof, without which no wise
 “ Man can reasonably believe him, which
 “ cannot be less than Miraculous and Divine.
 “ In all other Cases he comes under the
 “ Curse of those *whom GOD has not sent* ;
 “ He goes on his own Errand, and therefore
 “ must not expect his Wages from him.
 “ Whoever therefore cannot say with St.
 “ *Paul*, that he is *ordained a Preacher*,
 “ 1 Tim. ii. 7. (how great soever his *Abili-*
 “ *ties* may be) has yet no Title to testify
 “ Christ. For, though to be *able to perform*
 “ an Office may be a good Reason, why a
 “ Person should be *ordained* to that Office ;
 “ yet it gives him no Authority till he be so
 “ ordained. Every wise Man is not a Coun-
 “ sellor of State, nor every good Lawyer
 “ a Judge. *Ability* or *Skill* is only a Qua-
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“ lification, and must be enabled to act by
 “ something that transmits Authority. And
 “ it is very remarkable that when *Judas* was
 “ fallen from his Apostleship, though there
 “ were Numbers of sufficient Knowledge and
 “ Ability to supply his Office (*viz.* all that
 “ accompanied with the Apostles during the
 “ Time that the Lord *Jesus* went in and out
 “ amongst them) yet not one of them would
 “ presume to do it, but the Appointment of his
 “ Successor was referred to a Divine Election.
 “ A plain Demonstration that the Preaching
 “ or bearing *Witness* of *Jesus* and his *Resur-*
 “ *rection*, was not only a Work but a Divine
 “ Office: And that besides *Experience* and
 “ *Ability*, a particular *Ordination* was ac-
 “ counted necessary before any one might
 “ undertake it *.

And thus having shewed both the Necessi-
 ty of a *Ministry*, and the Necessity also of
 a *Divine Commission* to qualify such a Mi-
 nistry for the Performance of their Office;
 what better Use can I make of the whole than
 to observe to you the happy *Constitution* of our
Church, which is blest with a Ministry so qua-
 lified? They that preach the Gospel with us

* See Bishop *Taylor's* Divine Institution of the Office Minis-
 terial. p. 16, 17.

are not such as the Populace have made Choice of, and assigned to their Office, or such as have received a *pretended* Ordination from meer *Presbyters* or *Elders*, who were never invested with a Power to give it; but such as were set apart by a superior Order, who by a regular Succession from Christ himself derive their Commission to ordain others. A Blessing that all the Reformed abroad (if they mean what they say) envy us and wish for. For it is the peculiar Happiness of the *English* Church (among all that have thrown off the Errors of Popery) not to ascribe either to the Clergy or Laity any unprecedented Powers, nor yet to encroach upon their ancient Liberties. The *People* have still the Privilege of *objecting*, if they have any Thing to alledge against the *Morals* or *Conversation* of the Person to be ordained; and therefore are solemnly appealed to at the Confirmation of our Bishops, as well as in our Forms of Ordination both of *Deacons* and *Priests*. And in the Ordination of a *Priest*, the *Priests that are present* are to join with the Bishop in the *Imposition of Hands* to testify their Consent, whilst the *Bishop himself*, as the Mouth of them all, pronounces the Form, and communicates the Authority. And this being all the Share in Ordination, that was ever

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allowed to the Order of *Presbyters* from the Apostolick Age to that of the Reformation; our Church supposes that it is as much as any *Presbyters* now will claim or expect. She is sensible that there is no Instance, during all that Time, *i. e.* for fifteen hundred Years together, of an Ordination performed by *meer Presbyters* alone, which was ever allowed by the Church to be valid and good: And therefore she thinks she has no Power now to invest them with a Commission, which they were never before permitted to execute. Much less can she acknowledge those Persons to be invested with any such Commission, whom as deriving their own Orders (in Opposition to the *Episcopal*) from no other than *Presbyters*, she knows not how to look upon but as schismatical Laymen. These therefore we apprehend to have so little Authority to *commit* the Office, I am speaking of, to others; that as yet we are at a Loss to know by what Authority they take it upon themselves. It being evident from the universal Practice of the Church that no *Layman* (even in Communion) was ever allowed to preach in publick without the special Appointment of the Bishop*: And this only in a few Cases, where

* See *Bingham's Antiqu.* l. xiv. c. 4. ff. 4.

some

and Effect of Preaching.

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some singular Abilities of the Persons so commissioned, made their Preaching in a Manner necessary to the Church. For ordinarily the Office was the *Bishop's* Province, and only devolved upon the *Presbyters* themselves by his Licence and Consent. Such was the Constitution of the Primitive Church : And such, blessed be GOD ! is at present our own. Who then would refuse so necessary an Ordinance from so sure a Ministry, purely for the sake of hearing it from another which is bold to administer it without any Authority ? Should we mislead you, provided that you are not instrumental yourselves to your going out of the Way ; you will have this to comfort you, when you find yourselves in the Wrong, that the Error was properly none of yours. You followed those that were appointed to direct you, therefore we must bear the Blame of your going astray. Whereas when you follow those who have no Business to lead you ; you will be accountable, not only for going after strange Guides, but also for all the Errors into which they shall bring you. They had no Authority or Commission to direct you, and therefore if you are misled by them the Fault is yours. But it is Time I should proceed to the

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III. THIRD Head of my Discourse, under which I am to shew, that though they who preach the Gospel are Men like ourselves, so have nothing of *Terror* in them to frighten Men from hearing them; and yet are dignified with a Divine Commission, and so want no *Authority* to persuade Men; yet their Preaching has not generally that *due Effect* it ought to have. For so the Text informs us, that after the preaching of the *Son of GOD himself*, who certainly wanted neither Authority nor Words to gain the Belief of his Hearers; and of the Apostles after him, who spake also as the Spirit gave them Utterance, the *Jews* still persisted in Unbelief and Infidelity; *They have not all obeyed the Gospel*. Nay so few of them had attended to it, that the Apostle complains of their Incredulity in the Words of the Prophet, *Lord, who hath believed our Report?* Isai. liii. 1. It must indeed be owned, in behalf of the *Jews*, that *they* had a better Plea to urge for not obeying the Word, than *Christians* can ever alledge for themselves. The Quitting of their Law and Religion must have been the Consequence of their Obedience; whereas there is no other End proposed in preaching to *Christians*,
than

than to prevail with them to live up to that Religion which they already profess. And yet, notwithstanding so wide a Difference, that the Succession of Preaching with us, is as little as it was with them, is a Matter of Fact too evident to be denied. Nay it is a Truth so open and professed, that some do, for that Reason, cry out upon the Usefulness of the Institution, and because it produces no better Effects would have the Office discontinued. So that to go about to prove what no Body will gainsay, would be a needless Trouble: And therefore it may probably be of greater Use to shew that the Inefficacy of Preaching is not so much owing to any Default in the Ministers, as to the Indisposition of the Hearers. Who too often come, not with Desire to be edified and instructed, but meerly out of Custom, or to pass away the Time. Some indeed may be drawn by other Motives, but still such as are foreign to the true ones; and therefore they cannot reasonably expect Benefit from the Word since they come not for the sake of it. Nothing can be a greater Proof of this, than the ill Success of the most celebrated Preachers, who as little Influence the Lives of their Auditors, as Men of less Eloquence and meaner Parts; a sure

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Sign that the Unavailableness of Preaching does not proceed from the Insufficiency of the Ministers, but from the Corruption of the Hearers.

In short the Case of the most able Preachers now, is the same with that of *Ezekiel* of old, who was followed and admired for the Sake of his Prophecies, but could never prevail with the People to be warned by them. That Prophet's own Account of himself in this Matter, *Ezek. xxxiii. 30—33.* is so very applicable to the Subject we are upon, that I cannot forbear making use of it, with a little Paraphrase to describe the Case of such Preachers with us. *Son of Man*, (saith God to him) *the Children of thy People still are talking of thee by the Walls and in the Doors of the Houses* : i. e. in all publick Assemblies, and wheresoever they met, he was the Subject of their Discourse. *They speak one to another, every one to his Neighbour, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the Word that cometh forth from the Lord.* Whenever they knew he was to utter any Prophecy, they called upon one another to go and hear him. *They come unto thee as the People cometh*, i. e. in Troops and Companies, as the People go out to War, insomuch that the Place

Place where he prophesied was thronged and crowded. *They sit before thee, as my People:* S E R M.
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With as much Shew of Sanctity and Devotion, as if they were assembled for the Worship of God. *And they hear thy Words:* They

did not, it seems, only come, some to sit gravely and demurely, others to talk impertinently, or to fall asleep: But they were really attentive to what he said; they caught at his Words and would let nothing slip. But then it follows, — *But they will not do them, for with their Mouth they shew much Love, but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness.* So that notwithstanding all their

Attention and seeming Devotion, and though they liked and approved of his Doctrine; yet his Prophecies were neglected when they should be put in Practice, and all his Eloquence could not reclaim them from their Vices. *And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely Song of one that has a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument, for they hear thy Words, but they do them not.* His

Discourses were methodical and well composed, like a Song well set; and the Prophet himself had the Advantage of a good Voice; his Delivery was just and his Cadence true; which gave as much Life to his Discourses, as

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an Instrument to a Song : But yet for all this, his Prophecies were at last, no more than a Song ; they sunk not into their Hearts, but as soon as the Musick of them was over, the Words were forgot : *For, so it goes on, they bear thy Words, but they do them not.* And now who is there, that heareth this Description of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, but must apply it to many of our own Generation ? There is no need therefore of any Application of mine : I shall only desire that together with the foregoing, you would take the remaining Words into Consideration. *And when this cometh (so, it will come) then shall they know that a Prophet has been amongst them.* Such a Prophet, as their own Hearts had wished for, and therefore such as left them no Excuse for not obeying his Warnings. So that it is not, you see, the Perfection of the Preacher that makes his Discourses available ; but unless his Hearers also are rightly disposed, his Preaching is in vain. And this Disposition GOD only can give : It is he alone that can prepare Men's Hearts for the Reception of the Word, which the best qualified Preacher can only utter and make known to them. *A PAUL may plant, and an APOLLOS may water ; but it is GOD only that can give the Encrease,* 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

Neither

Neither one, nor the other, signifies any thing, unless the Blessing of God attend it : To his meer Grace and Favour it is owing, that the Word, by whomsoever preached, has any Effect. And that Favour and Grace none sure can expect, who assemble at Sermons, as the People, I have mentioned, did to *Ezekiel's* Prophecies, not for the Sake of profiting by what they hear, but for a little Amusement perhaps, for Custom or Fashion, for seeing or meeting their Neighbours and Friends, or upon some Call or other as insignificant and trifling, and sometimes in short only for the Sake of looking into a Church, which they happen to pass by. Where these are the Motives that draw Men to Church ; where they are *tossed in*, I may say, by such Accidents as these ; no Wonder if they return as empty as they came : It is possible indeed that something they hear may happen to strike them, and just for the Time give a Turn to their Thoughts : But what can be expected from Impressions so accidentally received, but that they should prove like the *Seed* in the Parable, which was *sown by the Way-side, and which therefore was immediately trodden down and devoured*, Luk. viii. 5, &c. As soon as they are gone, their old Thoughts return ;

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return; and their Carelessness of their Salvation, makes them forget what they heard, and in as little Time perhaps as they were hearing it: It being no difficult Matter for Satan immediately to snatch that away, which they got so casually and held so slightly. Neither do I deny that some may proceed a good deal further than this; that they may come to Church purposely to hear the Word of God; that when they hear it, they may receive it with Pleasure, and resolve to *practise* as well as *hear*: But with these again it often fares as it did with the *Seed* which happened to fall *upon the stony Ground, where it immediately sprang up, because it had not much Earth; but when the Sun was up, it was scorched, and because it had no Root it wither'd away.* For the Men we are speaking of, being affected for the present with the Doctrine delivered, resolve often upon the Spot, (but without considering the Difficulties they are undertaking) to reform their Lives, and to enter upon a Course of Piety and Devotion. And this Resolution they hold for a small Time; during which they embrace all Opportunities of being informed in their Duty. But when they find that Self-denial, Abstinence and Mortification are Parts of Religion, they pause and

and are at a Stand; and their Resolution not having Root enough in them to bear up under these, they forget it by Degrees, and relapse into their old Indulgences and Ease. Though there are some again who will proceed thus far; and undertake even the severest Duties of Religion at convenient Seasons, provided they may now and then be allowed to indulge their Appetites when they are warm and craving. But are not these again the Persons whom our Lord means by those who receive the Word *among Thorns*, and with whom *the Cares of the World, and the Deceitfulness of Riches, and the Lusts of other things, entring in, choke the Word and it becometh unfruitful?*

And thus it appears, I think too evidently and glaring, that neither the *Graciousness of the Institution*, nor the *Authority of the Preachers* is sufficient to render the Ministry, in such Manner as it ought to be, effectual. But I think what I have said, makes it equally clear that the Hindrances lie at the *Hearers* Door: And therefore a proper Application to those on whom it lies to hear, is the best Use I can make of the present Head.

If then you are persuaded of the Truth of what I have said, and you are convinced it is

S E R M. in your *Power* to make our Ministry more effectual ; you will not, I hope, want Arguments to shew that it is your Duty to do so. Consider that it is *your* Interest which *we* pursue, and that consequently if you obstruct or slight our Endeavours, it will end at last in your own Loss. Whenever therefore you come to attend our Ministry, let the Desire of Edification be the Motive that draws you, and resolve to practise as well as hear. Do not look upon our Sermons as transitory Entertainments for half an Hour ; but receive them as the Instructions of those who speak with Authority, requiring your Obedience for your whole Lives afterwards. And though our Discourses sometimes should have nothing in them new ; nothing but what you have heard before, perhaps more than once ; you may yet return home with as much Advantage, as if you had learned something you never knew before. For the End of Preaching is not only to instruct you in Things, in which you are ignorant, but also to press you to the Practice of what you already know ; not barely to make you wise, but to make you good too. And therefore when you hear the same Doctrines frequently taught, or the same Virtues frequently recommended ; you may assure yourselves

selves the Reason of it is because you are still SERM.
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 negligent in the Performance, and so still
 stand in need of fresh Persuasions. You have
 as yet been but *Hearers*, and not *Doers of the*
Word, and therefore the Preacher still thinks
 it his Duty to inculcate the same. It is in-
 deed more than possible that all his Repeti-
 tions at last may fail: But this he considers as
 your Misfortune more than his own: Being
 no further concerned in it *himself*, than to
 be grieved at his labouring in vain: A Trouble
 enough this too, to one that is affected to-
 wards his Flock as he ought to be; since it
 cannot but be a great Discouragement to have
 so many fervent Desires and sincere Endeavours
 for the Welfare of his People rendered
 vain and ineffectual even by those whose Good
 he aims at. To have so many earnest Exhortations
 and affectionate Persuasions, slighted by some,
 and unheeded by others, must certainly be very
 piercing to the Soul of the Minister. After so much
 Pains taken, and so much Time spent, to lead and
 conduct his Flock to Heaven, in what Agonies must
 he be, when he finds he shall get but so few of
 them thither? But so it fared with *Moses* and
Ezekiel, with the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, and
 even with *Christ himself*: And therefore we
 I must

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must not expect to be more successful than they were : We should rather bless God and be content, that notwithstanding all these Discomforts, we have still sufficient Encouragement left for the Performance of our Duty : Which it is the Business of my

IV. FOURTH and last Head to shew ; under which I am to prove that notwithstanding Preaching be generally so unsuccessful ; yet there still is, and ever will be, sufficient Encouragement for Ministers to be instant in enforcing the Word. For were the Advantage no more than the demonstrating our Obedience in the Calling to which we are appointed of God, and thereby securing our own Salvation ; yet this alone would be abundant Recompence for the Labour we undergo : The Fruitlessness of our Endeavours, and the Sights and Affronts of a disobedient and gainfaying People, we shall be infinitely more than made amends for by so ample a Reward. Nor need we doubt but that at the last Day (when God shall give to every one according as he has deserved) the Hardships and Discouragements we shall have undergone for his Sake, will be particularly regarded, and our *Discourses*, like our *Prayers*, will then

turn

turn into our own Bosom, Pf. xxxv. 13. And ^{S E R M.}
this, I say, (were there no other) is a suffi-
^{X.}
cient Encouragement for Ministers to persist
in their Duty. But they have further Mo-
tives than this to be instant in their Calling :
Two of which I shall mention : One of them
indeed is a melancholy one for those who are
disobedient to the Word, though it is ho-
nourable for the Ministers of it. And that is,
they shall be Vindicators of God's Justice,
in the Punishment of the Wicked at the last
Day, and Witnesses that the Torments, they
shall then be doomed to, will be wholly ow-
ing to their own Faults; who, *whether they will*
now bear, or whether they will forbear, shall
then know that there has been a Prophet a-
mongst them, Ezek. ii. 5. Such as will bear
Testimony before Men and Angels, that those,
to whom they were appointed to preach, have
wanted neither Instruction nor Exhortation to
turn and repent, nor have been destitute of
the instituted Means of Salvation. And there-
fore how zealous ought Ministers to be in
preaching the Word, since although their
Discourses should be fruitless here; they will
tend notwithstanding to the clearing of the
Justice of God hereafter?

But the other Means I am to mention is
the principal and most glorious one: And that

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is, that however unavailable Preaching is with the *Multitude*; yet still there are *some* who attend to it with Sincerity and Devotion, and thankfully embrace the Opportunities of hearing it: *Some* who still say, *How beautiful are the Feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad Tidings of good Things!* For though some Seeds may be lost by the *Way-side*, and others upon the *Rocks* and among *Thorns*; yet still, with God's Blessing, some will be *sown upon good Ground, which will spring up, and bring forth Fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.* There are in every Congregation, through the Grace of a good God, (there are in this, I trust) *some* well disposed Persons, who are glad and rejoice to be informed in their Duty, and readily put in Practice what they know to be such. And the instructing of these is an acceptable and pleasant Work: And though we could wish there were *more* such, yet need we not faint because there are no more; since the saving, we know, of one Soul from being lost, deserves the busiest Diligence of our whole Life. When *Abraham* interceded for *Sodom*, and intreated the Lord to spare the *whole City* for the Sake of *fifty* righteous Persons which he imagined might

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be therein ; he did not cease his Prayers because there wanted of so many, but redoubled his Petition as he found the Number deficient. *Ten*, at last, were thought worthy of his most earnest Prayers ; and he incurred the Danger of being too importunate with the Lord, rather than they should lose what his Intercession might obtain for them. *Oh ! let not the Lord be angry* (saith he) *and I will speak yet but this once, peradventure, TEN shall be found there* : And had there been *ten*, his Prayers had prevailed : For the Lord said, *I will not destroy it for ten's Sake*, Gen. xviii. 23, to the End. So that the Scarcity of the Righteous should not discourage us from using our utmost Diligence to keep them so : Since the instructing of *ten* Men only in the Duties of Religion may save a *Multitude* from Destruction. A Consideration that should affect not only the *Preachers* of the Word, but the *Hearers* of it too : Such Hearers I mean as reverence and practise as far as they are able, what they hear : Such as hear with Desire, and practise with Zeal : Such as these, I say, will from this Reflection be more zealous still : For the Sake of preserving their City or Neighbourhood under the Protection and Providence of God, they will daily endeavour to

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add more and more to the Holiness of themselves, to balance, if possible, what is wanting in others: Not that the best of you, should ever imagine yourselves to be one of the *Ten*; though I would persuade every single Man of you, if I could, to live as if there were but *nine* without you.

But the Application of this Head, (which is the Conclusion of the whole) more properly belongs to you, my Brethren, who are now going to undertake the Duty and Office which has been the Subject of my Discourse. Your *Abilities* and *Qualifications* have already been approved; and I don't question the *Sincerity* and *Holiness* of your *Intentions*, who come prepared to make so solemn a Profession of both, as you must presently do. But you will excuse me if I endeavour to confirm your *Resolutions*, which, believe me, will stand in Need of all the Assurances you can have, to strengthen them: You are called perhaps to Cures of different Tempers and Conditions: But, if you won't think I assume too much, I dare assure you beforehand, that in the best tempered of them all (provided you are conscientious in the Discharge of your Duty) you will meet with Difficulties enough to perplex you. To
 speak

Speak to *all* the Branches of the Pastoral Care, ^{SERM.}
is what neither my Province, nor my Subject, ^{X.}
nor my Time, will permit. The *Preacher*
is the Character which I have hitherto been
considering; and under that Character I beg
leave now to look upon you.

I think all our Congregations may be properly enough divided into three Sorts of Men: the *Refractory*, the *Negligent*, and the *Good*. By the *Refractory* I mean those, who, not only are *deaf* to the Declarations of the Gospel, but also set themselves to *oppose* them: who falling in with the Corruptions of the present Age (and there was never any Age sure that had more or greater) are for new modelling Christianity, and for introducing a Religion, (if it may be called a Religion) which has neither Discipline nor Faith. With relation to these, (my Brethren) I think you have but little to do: For I look upon them to be pretty much of that Sort of Men, whom the holy Penman declares it to be *impossible to renew again unto Repentance*, Heb. vi. 4—6. All the Danger is lest their Numbers and Prevalence should slacken your Endeavours to oppose the Contagion, and to keep it from spreading further still. For God's Sake let us remember to preserve our

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own Integrity at least, and to be able with St. Paul boldly to profess, that *we are not as the many which corrupt the Word of GOD, but as of Sincerity, but as of GOD, in the Sight of GOD, speak we in Christ*, 2 Cor. ii. 17. Our English Translation in this Place does not come up to the Spirit of the Original. Οὐ γὰρ ἐσμεν ὡς οἱ Πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ. *We are not as the Many, i. e. as the Generality, who adulterate the Word of GOD, in order to make Merchandize of it for Lucre and Gain* *. Those whom the Apostle expresses by καπηλεύοντες, Ignatius calls χριστέμποροι, and Greg. Naz. χριστοκάπηλοι, meaning Sellers of Christ, Traders in the Gospel, Hucksters in Divinity, that temper their Doctrine to the Palates of their Hearers, in order to put them off to the best Advantage and Gain. But I hope you, my Brethren, have not so learned Christ: Nor do you now undertake the Ministry of the Word in order to prostitute it to worldly Views; but to be faithful Dispensers of it, and, as the Apostle goes on in the aforecited Place, *as of Sincerity, as of GOD, in the Sight of GOD, to speak it in Christ*. Remember the *needful Exhortation* of St. Jude, that you would ear-

* See Hammond on 2 Cor. ii. 17.

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nestly contend for the Faith which was once de- SERM.
livered to the Saints, Jude 3. For never X.
sure was there a greater Occasion, never a
fitter Season for it. Though, according to
St. Paul's Charge, we are not to ask ourselves
the Question, whether it be a *proper Season*
for Truth, but to preach, and urge and re-
peat it continually, whether it be *in Season*,
or *out of it*. *I charge you* (saith he) *before*
GOD, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall
judge the Quick and the Dead at his Appear-
ing, and his Kingdom. Preach the Word,
be instant in Season, out of Season; Reprove,
rebuke, exhort with all Long-Suffering and
Doctrine: For the Time will come (his Pro-
phesy is fulfilled, for it is now come) *when*
they will not endure sound Doctrine; but af-
ter their own Lusts shall they heap to them-
selves Teachers, having itching Ears, 2 Tim.
iv. 1, 2, 3.

If thus you prevail against, or at least keep
from prevailing, the *Refractory* amongst you,
the Men of no Faith, and consequently of
no Morals neither; the Discharge of your
Office to the rest of your Congregations will
be more easy and delightful. *Difficulties* you
must expect: But then, for the most part,
they are such as will yield you some comfort-

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able Reflections, enough to balance them.
 { The *Negligent* (the second Sort of Men I have mentioned) will be numerous in all your Congregations. But if *you* are not negligent in duly instructing them; you will not be accountable for *their* Carelessness in practising. Your best Endeavours will not, we trust, be wanting to recover them; for you are sensible what a Lustre, such Endeavours, if successful, must add to your Glory in another World, where *the Wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3. And though your Labour should prove in vain as to them; you still will have the Satisfaction left, that you have freed your own Souls, and that your Pains here will in the next Life have a suitable Reward.

However I have observed that in all Congregations, by the Blessing of God, there are *some* that will yield us Comfort even here; Some, in whom you shall see the Fruits of your Labour springing up to your View, and encouraging the Sower still to add to his Seed, And of what Benefit these few may prove to the whole, I have already observed: But in a word, and to conclude; the Performance
 of

of your Duty, whether to Good or to Bad, is so sure of a Reward either in this Life or the next, and in some Measure, in both, that notwithstanding all the Opposition that is made to your Endeavours, you have Encouragement enough to be instant in your Calling, and, to use the Words of St. Paul, *to be stedfast, unmoveable, always abiding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know, your Labour is not in vain in the Lord,* 1 Cor. xv. 58. Neither our Planting nor our Watering shall be vain, if he vouchsafe to give an *Encrease*; and that He may do so, let us all join to ask his Blessing in these Words of our Church. * *O Almighty GOD,——make, we beseech thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach thy holy Word, and the People obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the Crown of everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

* Collect for St. Peter's Day.



SERMON XI.

Christ tempted.

MATT. iv. 1.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.

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I Have fixed on these Words to discourse on at this Time, with the same View that the Church proposes them to our Thoughts and Meditations upon this first *Sunday* within the Season of *Lent*. During this Season she supposes us to be in some Degree employed in looking into and examining our Spiritual State, in observing what Progress or Proficiency we have made in Religion and Virtue, and what Hindrances and Obstructions the Enemy of our Salvation still throws in our Way, or lays before us. And whilst we are taken up with such Thoughts as these, she concludes we shall see the Necessity of our continuing still militant here, in order to be victorious or triumphant hereafter. And there-

therefore that our present Difficulties and Discouragements may not slacken our Pursuit after that Crown of Glory we shall obtain, provided we manfully continue the War to the End; she shews us our Enemy foiled and subdued, and directs us where we may have Arms and Strength to keep him under. She shews us the Holy Jesus alone, set upon with all the Wiles of the Devil, under the utmost Disadvantage of Time and Place, and yet singly repelling that Arch-Fiend and Adversary of Men, and forcing him to retreat with Confusion and Shame. A Combat worthy the closest Observation of every Christian, through every Particular. But before we descend to consider it minutely, give me Leave to suggest to you the Reason *why* Providence assigned him this Trial and Conflict as to *himself*, before he should enter upon his Ministry and Office with respect to others.

Now the Reason of the Son of God's being made *manifest in the Flesh*, St. John tells us, was, *that he might destroy the Works of the Devil*, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τῆ Διαβόλου, 1 John iii. 8. or rather that he *might loose them*, (as the Greek Word signifies) *i. e.* that he might counter-act the Devil's Part, and set Men free from the Dominion and Power which

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which Satan by tempting our first Parents had obtained over them. He was to undo, as the *second Adam*, all the Mischief that the *first Adam* had done; to begin the Work of Man again, and consequently to go through that Trial and Probation of his Virtue and Strength, which the first Man, alas! though sufficiently warned and prepared for the Engagement, *could* not, or rather *would* not, stand.

The first *Adam*, though placed in the Midst of the Paradise of God; though indulged in the Use of all the Fruits and the Trees, which even *Eden* could produce, one only excepted; though carefully forewarned of the Danger and Ruin that would immediately ensue upon the tasting that one forbidden Tree; yet no sooner does the Tempter approach and allure him with the specious Beauties and Qualities of the Fruit; no sooner does he represent it to be *good for Food*, to be *pleasant to the Eyes*, and a *Tree to be desired to make one wise, and to be as GOD's knowing good and evil*, Gen. iii. 5, 6. but immediately the Wife deluded by the Devil, and the Husband by the Wife, both preferring the Gratifications of Sense to the Obedience of Reason, present Delights to Happiness

in Futurity, they both greedily swallow the Bait, and find indeed, as the Devil told them, their *Eyes opened*, but opened to what? why to see their own Folly, *Nakedness* and Shame; their *Knowledge of Good and Evil* enlarged, but by the woful Experience of the Loss of every Thing good to themselves, and the implanting of every Thing *evil* in it's Room.

And the common Parents of all Mankind being thus vanquished by the Devil's Wiles; the whole Race and Progeny of Men that descended from them, under the Curse and Effects of this original Sin, must naturally remain in Subjection to him. A Subjection from which it was impossible ever again to be free, unless every Man singly for himself, or another general Representative and Head of all Mankind, should, in the Name of all, renew the Combat, and enter the Lists with the Devil again, and by vanquishing and subduing him, spoil him of the Dominion and Power he had before obtained over us. But now this was what no *natural* Son of *Adam* could ever propose. For if *Adam* himself, whilst in his original Righteousness, and fortified with superior Assistance and Grace, could not stand his Assaults; how could any descended from him after his Fall, after his Nature was
become

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become corrupt, and left naked and disarmed of the Strength with which at first it was created and endued; How, I say, could any one descended from him under these Disadvantages, hope, with that small Remainder of Strength that was now left, to conquer HIM who had already proved too subtle and powerful for greater Abilities, and was now grown more daring and insolent by his former Victory? Or suppose one such Man in the World should be found; yet how could *one* Man, *one meer* Man alone, by doing what indeed was his Duty to do; transfer a Merit upon all the rest of Mankind, who have no Interest in, or Relation to, him, except that He and They are all of one and the same Nature?

But it being, in short, not in the Power of any one Man, or of all Men together, in that frail, weak, corrupted Nature, to which the Fall of the first Man has subjected them all; to rid themselves from the Power and Dominion which the Devil, their Arch Enemy, had gained, and continued to usurp over them; therefore the Son of God, in Pity to our Nature, proposed to come down from Heaven to help us. In order to this, he assumed and united our Nature to himself;

our

our *Nature* I say, *not any one particular* SERMON.
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Man that had existed before he united himself to him, but the very first original Element of our *Nature*, before it had any separate personal Existence. But this *Nature* was first freed and sanctified by the Operation of the Holy Ghost, from all the Impurities, Corruption, and Weakness, which *Adam's* Sin had entailed upon it: And our *Nature* being thus in *Christ*, the *second Adam*, (that peculiar promised *Seed of the Woman*, which was to *bruise the Head of the Serpent* by whom she had been deceived, *Gen. iii. 15.*) restored to the primitive Innocence and Purity, with which it was formed and endued in the first; being also supplied with the same spiritual Strength and Grace; it was now rendered fit and qualified to enter upon a new and fresh Contest with the same Serpent for the Deliverance of all Mankind in general, whom *Christ* came to represent.

Accordingly, observe, as soon as he is publicly and solemnly anointed to the Office he had undertaken; as soon as he is baptized and proclaimed by an audible Voice from Heaven, to be *the beloved Son of GOD*, whom *GOD* is pleased to accept to this Office; *i. e.* as soon as he professedly and formally

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mally enters upon the Work of our Redemption; his first Business is to begin a Contest with the Devil again, to stand all the Temptations and Trials his Malice shall put him to, and by resisting them all, and suffering them to make no Impression upon him, to give that Test and Proof of *Obedience* which was incumbent on *Man*, and then, as the *second Man*, to retrieve that Happiness which the *first Man*, and his natural Descendants, had by *Disobedience* forfeited and lost.

And to this Difference of Conduct between *Adam* and *Christ* upon their first Entrance on a State of Probation, should we apply what *St. Paul* says concerning the *Humility of Jesus* in his Epistle to the *Philippians*; it would give a very intelligible, and no way perverse Interpretation of that Place, which has been so grievously perplexed by Commentators and others. *Moses* tells us that the Devil, to seduce our first Parents, and to prevail with them to eat the forbidden Fruit, puffed them up with Pride and Ambition to become *as Gods*, at least in the *Knowledge of Good and Evil*, Gen. iii. 5. But the meek *Christ Jesus*, though in the *Form of GOD*, Phil. ii. 5—7. before his Incarnation, *i. e.* as truly *God* then, as he was afterwards
Man;

Man; yet when incarnate, when he submitted to live and dwell amongst us as Man, *he did not affect, or he did not covet* (as the Greek Words signify) and as the first Man did, *to be equal with GOD, but made himself of no Reputation, or, emptied himself,* (as it is again in the Greek *) i. e. veiled that Glory he had really in him, *taking upon him the Form of a Servant* (or, rather of a Slave, the lowest of Men) at such Time as he *was made in the Likeness of Men.* So different, so directly opposite were the Affections, with which the first and second Man passed the Stage of this World: *The first Man of the Earth, earthy,* as soon as he was formed and raised from the Dust, immediately affects to be *like the very God that made him: the second Man, the Lord from Heaven,* who was GOD indeed, is so far from affecting to appear as *equal with GOD,* that he *takes the Form of a Servant,* the meanest of Men in whose Likeness he was made, and in that Form lives and dies to atone for their Ambition. *Being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross;* to which

* For the Reading compare *Whitby* on the Place with Dr. *Jackson's Works*, vol. ii. p. 780—788.

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none but Slaves and the vilest of Men were
ever condemned.

Thus in general, or thus throughout, did the First of Men, and the Redeemer of Men, transact quite different and contrary Parts. But it is only one single Part of their Behaviour we are at present to compare: And that is, how each of them stood the first Trial of their Obedience, which was laid on them severally as the general Representatives of all Mankind. To do this, we must turn again to our first Parents in the *Garden of Eden*: For there (as I have already said) they were placed by their indulgent Maker; surrounded on all Sides with Plenty and Delight, and privileged to eat of every Tree and every Fruit even Paradise could produce, *the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* alone excepted. In this happy Situation, where nothing one would think that Man could desire was wanting to him, the Tempter approaches, and finding the Woman alone by herself, immediately allures her to taste of this one forbidden Tree. *By the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life*, 1 John ii. 16. (those sure Baits which have seldom or never failed him in his Attempts upon Mankind since) did he prevail

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first with the Woman, and then she with the Man, for the Sake of one unknown prohibited Pleasure (as they imagined) to venture and lose all the real Delights and Satisfaction they had leave to enjoy. For *when the Woman saw that the Tree was good for Food, and that it was pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the Fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her Husband with her, and he did eat,* Gen. iii. 6.

Thus fell the first Man, and in him all that were ever naturally to descend from him. But the second Man, which God raised up to undergo a second Trial, we shall find, and very happily for us, acting a very different Part. Not in a Paradise, with every Thing about him, that could take off the Edge or Whet of Temptation; but lonely in a Desert, the Devil's own Ground, hungry, and in Want not only of the Comforts, but even of the necessary Supports of Life, Circumstances, one would think, that should make the bluntest Temptations keen. In such Place and such Extremity does the Devil find him, but yet, as we shall see, he can find no Bait wherewith to deceive him. *The Prince of the World may come, if he will, but he has nothing in him,* John xiv. 30. Neither Desire, nor

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Pride, nor Ambition can he excite in him, but is foiled at every Temptation he presents, insomuch that the busy, unwearied Devil finding it in vain to press him further, leaves and departs from him, at least for a *Season, and Angels come and minister to him.* And Man through Christ, having thus retrieved the first Victory that Man had lost, from hence must we date the Beginning of our Salvation. How our great and victorious Redeemer went on to perfect it, and how it was compleated and finished at last, neither the Scripture before us, nor the Season we are in, lead us to consider. Both the Time and the Text confine me at present to the first Step in the *Desarts of Judea*: We are not yet to accompany him to *Jerusalem*, and from thence to *Calvary*, amidst the Noise and Outrage of a *Jewish* Rabble; but to follow him into the Wilderness solitary and alone, and there to view his first Engagement for the Redemption of Man. And here it will be necessary to consider particularly the *Time* and the *Place* of, the *Guide* and the *Preparation* to, the Engagement itself, and then the peculiar *Manner* and *Matter* of those *three especial Temptations* which the Evangelists record; fit Subjects to engage our Thoughts during this

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this Season : But at present the very Occasion of our Lord's going through this Conflict, as it has afforded Matter sufficient at one Time for *Instruction* and *Doctrine*, so does it also for *Application* and *Use*.

For from what has been said we may learn in general that no Christian, no Man, nay I may add no Creature, endued with Reason and Choice, is exempt from Temptation : *i. e.* no Creature is so privileged as not to stand a Trial of Obedience. Even the blessed Angels themselves, before they were fixed in Perfection and Glory, underwent such a Trial : For some Angels we read of, who *kept not their first Estate, but fell* : From whence we may infer that *any*, or *all* of them might have fallen ; and if so, there was a Trial made, which *would* fall, and which *would not*.

The *Angels*, who first had sinned themselves, Providence, in his Wisdom, makes his Instruments to try who amongst Men, (whom God seems to have created to replenish the Angelick Hosts) are fit to be made *like the Angels in Heaven*. And therefore scarce do we read of our first Parents being placed in Paradise, the *Porch* of Heaven, but the Devil is there to seduce them into Sin, that they

B b 3 might

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might be driven out of it. And even *the Son of GOD* himself, you see, when made Man, was not permitted to transact for Man, till the Human Nature he had assumed was again put to a fresh Trial of Obedience, and whether in him it would resist all Temptations to which it was prone. Nor did the Holiness of that *Divine Nature*, to which it was united, deter the great Tempter and Enemy of Mankind from playing his subtlety and Wiles against him. Though a Voice from Heaven had proclaimed the Holy Jesus to be *the Son of GOD*; yet this Divine Testimony, and a Testimony of a Character so sacred and high, allayed neither the Malice or Assurance of Satan, but exasperated both. That venomous Serpent, instead of retiring, swells the more with inward Poison, and makes the greater Haste to assail him. Expect not then Christians to escape the Assaults and Temptations of the Devil, when you see the beloved Son of GOD could not be free from him: You can never suppose that such Enmity as dared to strike at the very Head, will forbear to assail the weaker Members. His Malice be assured will push him on to exert his utmost Powers, nor will the Designs of Providence permit GOD *wholly* to restrain his Power.

For

For we must not suppose that God will confer the Rewards of Heaven indifferently to all Mankind alike, whether they think them worth reaching after and contending for or not. No; they that enjoy them must shew their Esteem of them, and prepare and make themselves *fit* for enjoying them. Holiness must pave the Way to Happiness. Our Virtue must stand Trials: We must live and act like reasonable Creatures, with a Sense of our Dependance on so good a God, that has such Treasures of Happiness in Store for *them*, who, in Opposition to all other Temptations, steadfastly obey him. And purposely to try this Obedience it is, that we are placed in this World, over which the Devil has such Influence and Power: Hither we are sent as into a State of Probation; and on our Conduct and Behaviour, whilst we are in this State does the Gain or Loss of Heaven and Happiness for ever depend. Every Man therefore must be continually on his Guard against the Tempter, and continually expect him. In whatever Stage or Condition of Life he may happen to be, he must expect some Test, some Proof, some Trial of his Virtue will be required of him. The Young, the Ripe, and the Advanced in Years, (whether high or low,

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rich or poor, or in middle State of Life) may be sure there are Temptations peculiar to each, to which he will be exposed : And the very next, for what he knows, unless he manfully stands it out, may prove his utter Fall and Ruin. Arm yourselves therefore and stand always prepared against an Enemy you can never avoid. Be but as strong as he is malicious ; obtain but of GOD to pronounce you his Sons ; and then let Satan do his worst.

Neither be dejected, though there should be a continued Violence in the Assault, and the greatest Appearance of Horror in the Impression. For what can be more abominable in itself than that which (you will hear in my following Discourses) was suggested to Christ, of Mistrust in GOD, Presumption, and Idolatry ? What again can be more repeated, than in the Succession of those detestable Suggestions by which, one after another, the Devil tried him * ? And if all these were consistent with the Sanctity of our Lord ; so as not to cast the least Blemish upon him ; may not Christians hence satisfy themselves, that the *blackest* Temptations, though they are Trials of Virtue, can be no Prejudice to it, if like their Head, they resist them, and express their

* *Gather on Lent. p. 71.*

Abhorrence of them? They carry with them, it is true, an Evidence, that we are not exempt from the Devil's Assaults: But this being *external*, and the Persons tempted meerly *passive*; such Persons are no more guilty of *Sin*, than a chaste Woman, who, being solicited by the lewd Importunities of a lustful Man, hears not but with Dislike and Abhorrence of the Proposal.

Take Courage then, my Brethren, and learn not to be frighted at any the most impious and filthy Temptations. Resist them; and, if you can, get from them, and avoid them. But if, notwithstanding your utmost Precaution, you must stand the Assault; stand it with your Eyes fixed firmly on Christ, and then doubt not but he will come in and help you. To be too much dejected and immoderately disturbed, may be *injurious* to your Virtue, in bringing Darkness upon your Soul, and Weakness upon your Spirit, and so render you pusillanimous in the holy Contest: But to stand your Ground, and fight boldly (with firm Confidence in Christ) will afford you Matter of Joy in the End, from the Comfort which will arise from a tried Fidelity. And it is upon Account of this successful Issue that they may have, that St. *James* instructs us to
I look

SERM. look upon Temptations as Matters of Joy.

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My Brethren, (saith he) Count it all Joy, when ye fall into diverse Temptations: Knowing this, that the Trying of your Faith worketh Patience, James i. 1, 2. — Blessed therefore is the Man that endureth Temptation: For when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love HIM, ver. 12. i. e. to them that shew they love him truly. For the Crown of Life is a Reward to be given to Virtue that is proved: And therefore till proved, no Man ought to expect the Crown.

And indeed were it not for Temptations and Trials; our Virtues would soon grow languid and dull. If our Souls were not, as it were, awakened and roused, by the Devil's tempting us; we should fall into the most dangerous Temptation of all: We should sink into Security, and from thence into Sloth. We should perform no Office or Duty of Religion; or if we did, we should do it without any inward Devotion, and purely as a Matter of Custom or Form. So that instead of gaining any *Strength* by Peace, we should gradually grow so weak and lifeless, that the least Difficulties that should afterwards appear would look like Giants, and make us afraid to encounter them.

Or

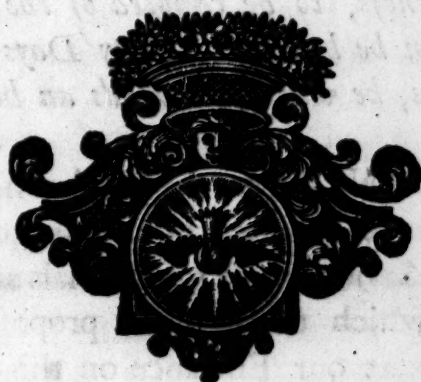
Or should we suppose that the Soul could keep up its Vigour, and perform the Offices and Duties of Religion with as much Zeal, without Temptations, as it could do under them; yet still let me ask, whether such a Soul would not by such a perfect Peace within, be disposed to conclude, that the good and calm Dispositions it enjoyed, proceeded from itself, and that it could command them at Pleasure. And would not such an Opinion of its own Strength, be apt to render it a Stranger to, and forgetful of, its Dependance on God? The ordinary Way therefore which God has chosen (*viz.* a good Disposition, enabled by Grace to *withstand* Temptations, but *subject* to them) is the best Means of keeping Christians in a due Knowledge both of God and themselves, and to lead them on to such Perfection as is necessary to attain the Crown of Life.

Nor need we fear our Enemy now so much as heretofore. Since however subtle and fierce he may be, we have had a Proof that he is not invincible. He has been conquered already by a Man of like Passions and Infirmities with ourselves: He has been thoroughly routed, and forced with Confusion to quit the Field. *Resist* him therefore again, every one of

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of you for yourselves, and he will again *fly from you.* Do not be afraid that your Powers are weaker than those with which the Holy Jesus withstood him: For when Jesus was tempted, we may piously believe that his Divinity remained quiescent in him; that his Godhead did not assist him in the Conflict, but left his Manhood alone to contend, though strengthened with sufficient Help from the Holy God. And such Helps he will vouchsafe to us all. Jesus, if we ask him, will himself stand by us: And as he bids us, so he will see and help us fight, and freely impart to us of the same Spirit, by which he conquered. *For we have not an High Priest, that cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all Points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of Need, Heb. iv. 15, 16. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able, (and if able, he is willing) to succour them that are tempted, Chap. ii. 18. No Temptation therefore shall take you, but such as is common to Man: For GOD is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: But will with the Temptation also make*
a Way

a Way to escape, that ye may be able to bear **SERM.**
it, 1 Cor. x. 13. Resist therefore, but man- **XI.**
fully, and you may be sure of the Victory, of
the greatest of Victories in subduing your own
corrupt Inclinations, and of the noblest of
Triumphs, since your conquered Passions
draw you up into Heaven.



S E R M O N XII.

**Christ led up by the Spirit into the
Wilderness to be tempted of the
Devil.**

M A T T. iv. 1, 2.

*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the
Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.*

*And when he had fasted forty Days and forty
Nights, he was afterwards an hungred.*

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XII.

HAVING seen the *End* which Providence designed in allotting our blessed Lord and Saviour those great Trials and Temptations, which the Church proposes to our Thoughts at our Entrance on this holy Season; I propose, this Day, to offer to your Contemplations some general Circumstances leading and conducing to them, which my Text particularly notes and points out to us, and which it will be very useful carefully to observe, before we proceed to a particular Consideration of the Temptations themselves.

And here the First Thing that requires our S E R M.
Attention, is what the first Word in my Text XII.
refers to, *viz. The Time* of this solemn En-
gagement between the Saviour and the Ene-
my of Mankind. THEN (saith the Evange-
list in the Passage I have read to you) *i. e.*
(as appears from the Close of the Chapter im-
mediately foregoing) As soon as he came from
the Waters of *Jordan*, where he had been
baptized, immediately after the Holy Ghost
had in a visible Manner descended on him,
when a Voice from Heaven had audibly pro-
nounced him the well beloved Son of GOD,
and whilst Jesus was yet full of the good Spirit
within him, *THEN was he led up—to be tempt-*
ed of the Devil——During all the Time of
his *private* Life, we do not find that the
Devil, in any *remarkable* Manner, set upon
him : But now when he has received an ex-
traordinary Testimony of GOD's *Love* and
Pleasure in him ; when he is anointed for the
Redemption and Salvation of Mankind, and
is just entring upon the Exercise of his great
Office and Ministry ; This is the Time which
the Devil thinks his proper Season : He con-
ceives that now, by one Foil (could he give
him one) he should render this distinguished
Son of GOD, but level with the rest of the Sons
of

of Men ; that he should frustrate the eternal Decrees of Heaven, and for ever quash all future Hopes of the World's Redemption. This Juncture therefore the Arch-Fiend seizes to attempt the Holy Jesus with his utmost Malice, Effort and Skill. Not that either the Devil could have tempted him in so strenuous a Manner, or that Jesus would have thrown himself purposely and designedly in the Devil's Way, had not the Holy Spirit of God permitted the one and conducted the other. For so the Text tells us in the

SECOND Place, *viz.* That Jesus was led up of the Spirit, i. e. by the *Holy Spirit* with which he was filled, and which now led him to this Conflict or Trial to see what Use he would make of his Strength.—Not that the Holy Spirit of God leads Men into Temptation with the same View, with which the Devil tempts : For he, it is plain, endeavours to force or entice us into Sin ; whereas when God tempts or leads us to Temptation, it is only for our *Trial*, that we may *resist* the Temptation, and by such Resistance give Proof of our Faith. God's Design is not to pervert, but to manifest our Obedience. This therefore we may assure ourselves was the End proposed

proposed by the Holy Spirit in leading up Je-^{S E R M.}
sus to be tempted of the Devil, *i. e.* not that ^{XII.}
the Devil should prevail over or allure him to
do any thing displeasing to God, but that Je-
sus might prove the Constancy and Stedfast-
ness of his Resolution and Obedience, in
Opposition to all the Snares and Temptations
the Devil could lay for him. Accordingly
we see the Spirit did not lead him to the Trial,
till he had first communicated to him a Ple-
nitude or Fullness of his own Power and
Grace. For so St. *Luke* tells us, *Jesus* (saith
he) *being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from*
Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the
Wilderness, *Luke iv. 1.* But then as the
Grace and Strength he received was greater
than that of any Man before; so must the
Trial he undergoes (as it is a Trial of the
Human Nature in general) be greater and
stronger than ever any one, in that Nature, be-
fore went through. He has not the Liberty
of staying in a Paradise, in the Garden of
God, and waiting there till the Tempter
comes to him; but must go forth into a Place
of Horror and Dread, and there engage him
on his own Ground. For this I apprehend
to be the Meaning of the Text, when it
tells us in the

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THIRD Place, that Jesus was led up of the Spirit *into the Wilderness* to be tempted of the Devil, *i. e.* He was led up into the Devil's own proper Fortrefs and Hold : Into that Wilderness into which the *Scape-Goat* (as our *English* Bible expreffes, but which ought to be translated, the *Goat for AZAZEL**, *i. e.* for the strong Apostate, or for the Devil, Jesus, I say, was led into that Wilderness whether this Goat) on the great Day of Atonement was sent, *bearing* the Iniquities of all the People : *Into a Land not inhabited*, but desolate and forlorn : And such Places the Scripture frequently represents to be the Habitations of Devils. Both old *Babylon* and new, when destroyed and made desolate, are expressly said to become *the Habitations of Devils, and the Hold of every foul Spirit*, Baruch iv. 5. and Rev. xviii. 2. And accordingly St. *Luke* acquaints us, that when the Devils got Possession of the miserable *Gadarene*, they *drove him into the Wilderness*, Luke viii. 29. that there they might have the greater Power over him. And indeed a Wilderness, such a one at least, as this is described by St. *Mark* to be, a Desert where none but wild

* See Spencer p. 1040. &c.

Beasts

Beasts inhabit, *Mark* i. 13. the Lion of the Forest, and the roaring Lion of the Wastes of Hell, is fit for Temptation, as naturally filling those that are in them with Horror and Dismay. Hither therefore Christ is led of the Spirit to meet the Devil; that the Devil having all the Advantage that might be, as to Opportunity and Place, his Foil and our Saviour's Victory might be the greater.

Besides, in this Place of Loneliness and Solitude, Jesus has no Second or Assistant to help him; but enters into the Engagement entirely alone. And indeed in all his remarkable Conflicts, in all his Distresses, he was always sequestered from the Help of Man. In his Agonies in the Garden, whilst *he* was sweating Drops of Blood, his *Disciples* were reposed at some Distance from him, and fast asleep. And when he was apprehended, it is particularly noted, that they every one of them forsook him and fled. This was to shew, that the whole Work of our Salvation lay upon him; that he had no Fellow-Helper or Assistant in it: But, as the Prophet speaks in his Person and Name,—*I have trodden* (saith he) *the Wine Press alone, and of the People there was none with me: — I looked and there was none to help, and I wondered that*

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there was none to uphold : Therefore mine own Arm brought Salvation unto me, and my Zeal it upheld me, Isai lxiii. 3, 5. But to proceed — We are told in the

FOURTH Place, That in this Wilderness our Saviour continued for *forty Days*. He was there in the Wilderness *forty Days*, Mark i. 13. to which St. Luke adds, that in those Days he did eat nothing, Luke iv. 2. The Temptation that was approaching Jesus very probably knew beforehand : And therefore might spend those Days in Fasting and Prayer, that he might the better prevail with God for his Assistance, and that the Holy Spirit might abide with him. The Reason why the particular Number of *forty Days* were assigned was, perhaps, that as *Moses* twice at the Delivering of the Law, and *Elias* once at the Restoration of it, had fasted this Number of Days before him ; and that as the *Israelites* were condemned to wander the same Number of Years in the Desert, the same Desert where *Moses* and *Elias* had kept their Fasts, and that probably the same where Christ was fasting now ; For this Reason it may be, that Christ humbled himself thus for *forty Days*, at the Accomplishment of the old Law, and

the

the Promulgation of the New, to the End that he might fulfill those former Types. Not that any of these Fasts were natural, or such as any Man could bear of himself: For it is plain they were miraculous, especially this of our blessed Lord, who, (it appears from the Evangelists) was not an hungry all that while. For so they tell us that *when he had fasted forty Days and forty Nights, i. e. when the Days were ended, (and not before,) he was afterwards an hungred, compare Mat. iv. 3. with Luke iv. 2.*

And this first Discovery of his real Humanity, and that he was subject to such Wants, as Human Nature is subject to, gave the Devil the first Handle or Opportunity for his Assault. Not but that during all the Time, he might have been under some Degree or other of Temptation. For St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* both seem to say that he was forty Days tempted of the Devil. Though the last Attack only, as the most violent of all, is particularly related, We may assure ourselves indeed that the Devil's Eye was not off from our Saviour at any Time of his Sequestration. But now because he sees one Part of him lie more open, he applies himself to it, with all his Might: Which leads me to the first of his great Temptations,

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tations, which I have undertaken particularly to consider. But as each of them will afford Matter for an entire Discourse, I shall conclude my present one with some useful Inferences and practical Improvements from the cursory Observations we have now been making.

And from hence in the first Place we are furnished and supplied with comfortable Doctrine wherewith to allay the Doubts and Mistrusts of many good Christians, who, because they find their religious Duties often followed by violent Temptations, conclude that they have not performed them as they ought to have done, and consequently that their Service was not accepted. But now a due Attention upon the Scripture before us will teach them that such Assaults following so immediately upon their Sacraments and Prayers, are a Sign that they are the better and not the worse (as they fear) for the Duties they have been doing, and that the Devil now attempts them with the greater Violence and Force, because he knows they are now in higher Favour with God. For Jesus, you see, had all the Marks of Affection and Love that God could shew him. *John* who baptized him, publickly declared that he himself had much more need to be baptized of him. The Holy Ghost descend-

descended and rested visibly upon him : And the Father with an audible Voice from Heaven proclaimed him to be his *beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased.* And yet the very next thing we read of him, is that he was tempted ; yea, that he was led by the Holy and blessed Spirit himself into the Wilderness on purpose that he might be tempted of *the Devil.* A plain Demonstration that the Sacraments, or the Gifts and Graces of God, are not given to free and exempt those to whom they are given *from being tempted* : No surely, they are designed by God as Arms and Weapons wherewith to defend themselves *when* they are tempted. And therefore if the Devil assault you as soon as you have been engaged in Holy Duties ; it is a Sign he thinks you have been supplied with fresh Powers and Strength to resist, and therefore comes with Fury, if he can, to spoil you of it and wrest it from you. If a Robber sets upon you, on the Road, it is because he apprehends you have got a Booty : And if he comes with extraordinary Arms, 'it is because he supposes you are prepared to withstand him : In like Manner, in a Christian Life, the Graces you receive by Sacraments and Prayers, are both the Treasure and Arms of a Christian. The

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Devil is a publick Robber and Thief: And therefore if he attempt you upon your Return from these Duties; it is in order to secure or recover his spoil, when he sees himself in the greatest Danger of losing it. If Men, not accustomed to these Duties of Religion, feel the less of these Struggles within them; it is because they have nothing of which the Devil can rob them, or perhaps because the Men themselves are his own already. But when once Men shew a Desire and Design to get loose from him; no Wonder if he takes more than ordinary Pains to retrieve them again. And therefore as we may expect the Devil to be more busy and violent in his Temptations, as we become the more engaged to God, and the more endeared to him by the Pledges of his Grace; so, as I have said, we should rather rejoice, than be dejected, if after such Times we find that he is so. Whenever therefore you are in such Circumstances, instead of giving Way to Doubts and Mistrusts, call to Mind the good Advice which the wise Son of *Syrach* gives you; *My Son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thyself for Temptation: Set thy Heart aright, and constantly endure, and make not haste* (i. e. be not impatient) in
Time

Time of Trouble. Cleave unto him, and de- SERM.
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part not away, that thou mayst be increas'd at
thy last End, Ecclus. ii. 1—3.—— Not that
We are at any Time to depend so much upon
our Strength and Grace, as to seek Tempta-
tions of our own Accord, or voluntarily to
run into them to try the new Strength we
have by our Attendance on Sacraments and
Holy Ordinances attained: For this is con-
trary to a

Second Particular we have taken notice of
in the Passage we have been handling, which
informs us that though Jesus was newly bap-
tized, and was newly filled with the Holy
Ghost: yet he did not go to seek the Temp-
ter of his own Motion, but was *led into the*
Wilderuess by the Holy Ghost. A proper Hint
and Instruction to Christians, never to pre-
sume so far upon their Abilities, as to thrust
themselves into Temptations without a Call.
It is so far from being our Duty to seek them,
that our Lord has taught us to pray against
them. *Lead us not into Temptation,* is one
Petition in his own short Prayer which con-
tains, we know, but seven in all. But if
we seek them of our own Accord, we run,
of our own Heads, into that very Temptation
we pray against. For whatever Conceits we
may

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may possibly have of our own Powers; there are but few of us, I fear, but whom Experience has often taught, that we are but very ill Judges of the Strength in ourselves, or of the Force of a Temptation. If God please to try us; he means us no Hurt, and he does it with great Reason, and great Mercy: But if we go to try ourselves; we may, it is possible, mean *well*, but I am sure *not wisely*. We have Enemies more than enough *without*, and one of our own *always within*: How much then do we become our own Tempters, and prove Satans to ourselves, when we run out of our Way purposely to meet the World and the Devil, invite them home, to shew how little Interest they have in us?

And what I now say, I desire may be applied, not only against seeking or inventing Temptations, in order to *overcome them*; but also to the shunning all Occasions of Temptation, we can possibly foresee, for fear we ourselves should unfortunately be overcome by them. For in every Employ, in every Business and State of Life, they crowd in fast enough upon us, to keep us always in Action and upon Guard. In Eating or Drinking, in Conversing or in Solitude, in Business or in Leisure, in Riches or in Poverty, in our Occupa-

Occupations or Trades ; in whatever Condition, whatever Engagement, or whatever Time ; we shall find ourselves beset and encompassed with Temptations, and as long as we have Sensations, Affections and Passions, shall never want Dangers enough to withstand. Since then, whether we will or no, we have always Enemies enow to encounter ; what need have we to provoke new Adversaries to help them, and run into Hazards which we may as easily shun ? Let us be but careful to stand upon our Guard, and manfully to persevere where we cannot avoid ; and we need not be ambitious of further Honour and Glory, since this is sufficient to secure us the Crown.

And that you may the better engage God's Assistance and Grace to enable you to this, give me Leave in the third Place to recommend to you, or rather to remind you of, the *Method* and *Preparation* which our Saviour used before his *Engagement* or *Conflict* with the Devil ; which were those of *Fasting* (as the Evangelists tell us) and undoubtedly of *Prayer*. Not that I would exhort you to endeavour yearly to imitate our Lord in the *Length* of the Fast which at the Entrance on his great Office, and for once only in his Life,
he

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he himself thought fit to observe ; no ; this, though you *would* do *ever so often*, yet neither *need* you, nor *can* you, ever do *once*. Our Saviour's Fasting for forty Days together is no more to be imitated by the most zealous of his Disciples ; than his being born of a Virgin, than his entring into a House, the Doors being shut, than his walking on the Water, or commanding the Winds. And yet even this Instance of his Fasting and Abstinence, though not written for our *Imitation*, is yet written for our *Instruction*. And therefore though we *are not* to retire into a *Wilderness*, and though we *cannot* fast for forty Days together as our Saviour did ; yet nothing hinders but that during the Course of forty Days (which the Church has from ancient Times set apart yearly in Commemoration of our Saviour's Abstinence and Fasting, nothing, I say, hinders, nothing forbids, nothing makes it superstitious, or unseemly) to dedicate some Days or some Hours of this Season to the examining the State and Condition of our Souls, to the looking back into our past Mis-carriages and Sins, and to a more solemn Humiliation of ourselves before God for the obtaining of his Pardon of what is past, and of his Grace to strengthen and assist us for the

Time

Time to come. If it be too much to sequester ourselves during the *whole Season*; yet surely we may retire now and then for a Day, or now and then for two or three Hours, from the unnecessary Business and Hurry of Life, from needless Visits and trifling Amusements, to trim our Lamps, to provide fresh Oil, that so when we go forth into the World again, we may appear with a clearer and a stronger Light.

This is enough to vindicate the Church from any Slanders or Calumnies that shall be laid on her, for appointing the present Season of Lent for Duties of this Kind: In which Season she does not propose to us to follow our Lord in things *impossible*; but to imitate his Example in what we may. If Jesus, who had no Sins to chastize himself for, no Failings to lament, no corrupt or rebellious Passions to subdue, fasted entirely (though *miraculously* indeed) for forty Days, the better to prepare himself against extraordinary and almost *miraculous* Temptations; we surely, who are laden and oppressed with the Burthen of past Sins, and know how frail and subject we are to yield to any *common* Temptation that assaults us, may very well fast and pray sometimes, and during the Space of forty Days, particularly

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larly observed to this solemn End by Numbers of devout and pious Souls ; we, I say, in Conjunction with them, may surely, without any Offence to others, or Injury to ourselves, repeat now and then our Fastings and Prayers, in order to humble ourselves for our past Mis-carriages, to give a Fervency to our Prayers for Grace to withstand any future Danger, and to subdue our fleshly Lusts and Appetites, and all unlawful and inordinate Cravings.

All *serious* Christians therefore (and I do not expect on this Subject to be regarded by others : But all *serious* Christians I say) will chuse to submit, or at least to perform some decent Regard, to the Discipline which the Church at this Time prescribes, to devote themselves to more than ordinary Acts of Devotion, which is the first Step to the separating of Souls from the Love of the World, and drawing them towards God.

And such Christians will also think *Retirement* and *Retreat* (as much as may be) the best Help for such Designs. Some indeed recommend a *continual solitary* Withdrawing from the World and *all Conversation*, as necessary to subdue the Temptations that may assault us, from the Practice of our blessed Lord in the Text. But such a Retirement

as

as our Lord complied with, we have shewed to be more a *Means* of Temptation, than a *Prevention* of it. For he was led into the Wilderness (as we have said over and over again) that he *might* be tempted. This is therefore what we cannot recommend: And many, it is to be feared, who have endeavoured to imitate him in this Particular, have found themselves in the *same Danger* that he was, though they have not had the *same Success* in getting out of it. They that out of an Affectation of Holiness seek for Solitude in Wildernesses or Rocks or Caverns of the Earth, often run into the very Seat of Temptations, when they think to avoid them. And therefore it was a usual Saying of some Philosophers, “that he that chose to live alone, must either be a God or a Devil”. However there is a *prudent* Solitude and Retreat, which may be practised sometimes, and so as to contribute much to Security. Sinful, disorderly, and all unnecessary Conversation with the World may surely be retrenched. Vain, and idle, and extravagant Discourses may certainly give Place to stricter Discipline. The too lasting Impressions of worldly Things may be weakened by an Application to the Things of Heaven: And those Ideas may
be

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be rooted out by Reading and Prayer, which otherwise the Devil is very ready to turn to their Ruin. This is the Way for a Christian to come at the Command of himself, to bring his Passions in Subjection to his Reason, and his Reason in Subjection to the Will of God. — If any one think that such Discipline and Care and Guard over ourselves is at *all Times* needful, and therefore necessary to be observed at *one* Season as well as at another; I am very ready to subscribe to his Opinion. But unless he be a Man, or till he can shew me a man, so strictly uniform, as to observe his Duty at all Times whatever; he has no Reason to quarrel with the Church for setting apart a particular Season that shall remind us all of recollecting and examining how far each of us have deviated from it. Let us therefore all of us join once more in that apt and excellent Collect which the Church appoints at the Beginning of this Season.

O Lord, who for our sakes didst fast forty Days and forty Nights; give us Grace to use such Abstinence, that our Flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey they Godly Motions, in Righteousness and true Holiness, to thy Honour and Glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one GOD, World without End. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

Christ tempted to Mistrust in God.

MATT. iv. 2, 3, 4.

When Jesus had fasted forty Days, and forty Nights, he was afterwards an hungred.

And when the Tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of GOD, command that these Stones be made Bread.

But he answered, and said, It is written, Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of GOD.

WHEN Christ, speaking of the Baptist, asked the People, *what it was* SERM. XIII.

which they went out into the Wilderness to see, Luke vii. 24—26. he plainly supposed that there was something very great and more than usual in John; or else they would not have gone into the Wilderness on Purpose to see him. The Scene therefore in the Text (on which I am at present engaged) being laid in

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the Wilderness; we may raise our Expectations to see something remarkable, and well worthy of our Attention; not *a Reed only shaken with the Wind*, nor *a Man clothed in soft Raiment*; but an immoveable Rock, a Man clothed with Power and Strength; a Prophet greater much than *He*, who was much the greatest of any before him. We are here called to behold not *Michael the Arch-Angel contending with the Devil for the Body of Moses*; but a Battle fought for our Sakes and on our Behalf, the *true Michael* contending again with the same Arch-Fiend for the *Body of his Church*, for *Moses*, and all Men, to save their Bodies and Souls both. We are here to see the Wisdom of the new Serpent, (that Serpent by whom, being lifted up, we are healed and live, *Numb. xxi. 8, 9.*) matching the Craftiness and Subtlety of *the old one*, *Rev. xii. 9.* lurking to bite and destroy in the Wilderness. We are to see the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, *Rev. v. 5.* coping with that fierce and *roaring Lion which walks about seeking whom he may devour*, *1 Pet. v. 8.* In short we are to see the Saviour of Men, the Son of God, conquering the Devil, the Adversary both of God and Man: A Combat worthy the closest Observation through all

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all the Particulars : Of which the *Time*, the *Place*, the *Guide*, and the *Preparation* have already been spoke to : The *Engagement itself* is what we are now to consider, where we are chiefly to observe the Devil's Art and Stratagem in the Assault, and the Arms made Use of by Jesus to repel him. But as it was a furious Attack which our Saviour stood; as the Devil would have worked first upon one Passion, and then another; and so was forced to have Recourse to different Arguments, or rather Fallacies, to apply; to give his Temptations a proper and due Consideration, it is necessary we should consider them distinctly. I shall therefore,

I. FIRST lay before you the Nature and Subtlety of the Devil's Temptation, with the Strength and Force of our Saviour's Reply.

II. SECONDLY, I shall make a practical Observation or two upon the real Intent and Design of the Temptation, and so conclude.

I. FIRST, I shall lay before you the *Nature* and *Subtlety* of the Devil's Temptation, with the Strength and Force of our Saviour's Reply. And here I must begin with that *Infirmity* of Christ, to which his Humanity

(though united with his Divinity) made him subject; and which therefore the Devil, as soon as he had discovered it, laid hold of as a proper Opportunity to begin his Assault. For so we read, that *when Jesus had fasted forty Days and forty Nights, he was afterwards an hungred.* And then the Tempter made his Approach. The Devil's Eye was not off our Blessed Lord, during any of the Time of his Sequestration and Retirement. No: St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* both assure us, that he was all the *forty Days tempted of the Devil*, Mark i. 13. Luke iv. 2. But now, because he sees him in one Part more open to his Attempts, he applies himself more closely, and falls upon him there with his utmost Violence and Art. In order to this, since he finds him hungry, and perhaps faint and languishing for Want of some necessary Sustenance to support him; he first begins to allure him with Food, which he might reasonably suppose was more desirable to him then, than Glory or Wealth. The Tempter therefore came to him and said, *If thou be the Son of GOD, command that these Stones be made Bread.* Where by the Way it is worth our While to observe the Kindness of the Devil's Offer. The hungry Jesus wants *Bread*, and the

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the indulgent Satan shews him a *Stone*. *If* ^{S E R M.}
a Son ask Bread of any of you that is a Father, ^{XIII.}
will he give him a Stone? Luke xi. 11. The
very Proposal, (if Christ had not known him
before) was enough to have discovered whence
he came. And yet the Temptation, consi-
dering the present Circumstances of our Lord,
and the Barrenness of the Place, was well
laid and artfully applied. It seems to be
fetch'd from that miraculous Provision, which
God always had made for his former Ser-
vants, whenever any of them had been driven
to the same Distress; and consequently it ap-
pears to be urg'd with a Design to raise in
Jesus a Diffidence and Distrust of God's Care
over him; to put him upon renouncing any
further Dependence upon his Provision; and
to make Use of that Power which he had
already received, to provide for himself. The
Words of the Devil (if taken in this View)
may be paraphras'd thus: " Son of God,
" if so thou art; (and sure a Voice which
" pronounced thee so from Heaven may be
" believed) what is it that induces thee in
" this desolate Place, to abide so patiently
" in this Hunger and Distress, and to seem
" as helpless as if thou wert but meer Man?
" Thou knowest that here thou canst expect

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“ no Food by any ordinary Supply : and what
 “ avails thy extraordinary Power, if thou
 “ doest not, or mayest not, make Use of it
 “ now, at such a Time, for thy own Re-
 “ lief? Nor think a Miracle ill bestowed,
 “ because laid out upon thy bodily Provisi-
 “ on : For who was ever suffered to wan-
 “ der here, without the Expence of Mira-
 “ cles to sustain them? Were not the Hea-
 “ vens opened daily for forty Years together
 “ to rain Bread upon the *Israelites* ; and
 “ were not the Rocks obliged to yield forth
 “ Water to find them with Drink? When
 “ only *Elijah*, a single Prophet, had under-
 “ gone the Abstinence of one Day only in
 “ this desolate Place, an Angel dispatched
 “ from Heaven to comfort him, provided
 “ him thou knowest *a Cake ready baken*, and
 “ a *Cruse* ready filled, and carefully stood by
 “ him till he had twice eat and drank, and
 “ was sufficiently refreshed, 1 *Kings* xix. 4,
 “ &c. Nay even the rejected *Hagar* and her
 “ Son, though Outcasts from the House and
 “ Family of the Faithful, and that by God’s
 “ especial Command ; yet were not so far
 “ forgotten by Providence, but that when
 “ they were in the Wilderness, destitute and
 “ forlorn, the Angel of God purposely de-
 “ scends

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scends to nourish and sustain them. How S E R M.
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is it then that thou, who art far from being an Outcast, who art not only of the Family and Household of Faith, but also art the very Object of their Faith, the Center of all their Confidence and Trust; that thou, who art not only a Prophet, but the Sum and Completion of all the Prophets before thee; that art not only of *Israel*, the chosen and favourite People of God, but hast lately been proclaimed beyond them all, *his beloved Son in whom he is pleased*; How comes it that thou only, with all these Characters, art neglected and left alone in this desolate Place, and in such Extremity of Hunger and Want? Is not this a Sign that thy Father thinks thee sufficiently able to provide for thyself? And therefore if thou art truly the Son of God, and art endued with a Power, equal to what that Title implies; it concerns thee to exert and make Use of it now, when thou seest thou must look for no farther Help from him."

In some such Terms as these, or the like, we may suppose the Devil to have couched and disguised the Bait he laid for our Blessed Lord, the Subject of which only the Evan-

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gelifts exprefs, and that in general Terms. But by thus covering and gilding his Design, the crafty Devil might imagine that he should bring our Saviour either into a Doubt of the Divine Power invested in him; or else to presume upon it, to provide for himself, from a Distrust of his Father's Providence over him, and not to wait till he in his good and proper Time should send him a Supply. And it is certain that to have turned *a Stone into Bread*, would not have been more faulty in itself, than the *multiplying of Loaves* already provided, or the *turning of Water into Wine*. But in the present Case, it was not fit for Jesus himself, who knew on whom he depended, to forestall or hasten the Provisions designed him: Nor were Miracles to be lavished away or abused, for the Devil's Conviction, or at his Command. Jesus therefore does not at all concern himself to convince Satan that he was the Son of God: But shews that he had no Reason to mistrust God's Care of him, whether he was truly his Son or not.

To this end he wisely divests the Devil of his Arms, and wrests from him the very Ground of his Temptation. Satan, we see, had taken it for granted, that Man could not
be

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be sustained unless he had *Bread* to support him: But our Saviour shews him from an infallible Evidence, from the Word of GOD, that he had very grossly mislaid his Suggestion. For *he answered and said, It is written, that Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of GOD.* The Place where this is written is in the 8th of *Deuteronomy*, ver. 3. where *Moses*, in exhorting the Children of *Israel* to Obedience, in regard of GOD's Providence and Dealing with them, reminds them of his sustaining them miraculously in the Wilderness, where no ordinary Sustenance could be procured for them. *He suffered thee* (saith he) *to hunger, and fed thee with Manna (which thou knewest not, neither did thy Fathers know) that he might make thee know, that Man does not live by Bread only, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the Lord, doth Man live, i. e. by every Thing* (for so the Word in Scripture often signifies) *which GOD by his Word or Command appoints or substitutes to nourish and sustain us.* For GOD, if he please, can either sustain us *without Bread at all*, as he did *Moses* and *Elias* before, and *Jesus* now, for forty Days; or else he can feed us with
Bread

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Bread showered down immediately from Heaven, as he did the *Israelites* for forty Years. He can either send new Provisions by repeated *Miracles*, as he did to his Prophet by the Ministry of a *Raven*, 1 *Kings* xvii. 4, &c. or by one single Miracle he can multiply the Provisions we have already, as he did the *Widow's Oil and Meal*, in her *Barrel and Cruse*, ver. 14, &c. It is true indeed that in *ordinary Cases*, we are fed and nourished by *ordinary Food*: Yet even in *all Food* the Power that sustains, is the Power that comes forth entirely from GOD. For without his Providence, even the Bread we eat would have no Quality or Power to feed us: Should he but withdraw his Blessing from it, we should perish immediately, though in the Midst of the greatest Plenty and Abundance. We are not therefore to fix our Eyes so intently on the Means, as not to look up to that Hand, from whence alone it's Sustenance proceeds. But (to use a devout and elegant Expression in the Book of *Wisdom*) *Thy Children, O Lord, whom thou lovest, should know that it is not the growing of Fruits that nourisheth Man, but that it is thy Word which preserveth them that put their Trust in thee,* *Wisdom* xvi. 26.

Hav-

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Having thus seen the Nature and Subtlety ^{S E R M.}
of the Devil's Temptation, with the Strength ^{XIII.}
and Force of our Saviour's Reply, I am to
proceed in the

II. SECOND Place to make a practical
Observation or two upon the real *Intent* and
Design of the Temptation ; which I have al-
ready shewed was to bring our Saviour either
to suspect the Voice from Heaven that had
pronounced him the *beloved Son of GOD* ;
or else to mistrust his Father's further Provi-
dence over him, and therefore to have Re-
course to his own Abilities and Power to pro-
vide for himself. And these are the two
Ends which the Devil still vigorously pursues,
or endeavours to compass among the Disci-
ples of Christ : But for our more orderly Pro-
cedure, let us consider each of them a little
distinctly.

First then, as Satan, in the Temptation
before us, would have raised in our Saviour
a Doubt whether he was *the Son of GOD* ;
so still is it one of his main Busineses in the
World, to suggest, by his Emissaries, Ob-
jections against his Divine Authority ; to
make Men doubt whether he was truly sent
of God ; to question the great Truths he
came

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came to reveal, to represent them as unreasonable and absurd, and still to adhere to those poor and barren Apprehensions of the Deity, which the dark and Heathen World take up with, as preferable to what is now discovered by Christian Light and Gospel Revelation. This I say is the principal Attempt of the Devil; well knowing that doing this, *i. e.* doing it with Success, he keeps Men still under his own Empire and Dominion. There being no Way left for the Recovery of fallen and sinful Man, but a full Faith, a firm Assurance, that he who came to raise and save us, is not only Man but GOD. For how should he else have ransomed the World? How should he have done, how should he have suffered, that which was satisfactory to his Father's Wrath? How should his Actions or Passion have been equivalent to the Sins of the whole universal World? Since therefore all our Comfort, all our Hopes rest on this single Point entirely; here without Doubt we must expect a Battery; and therefore here we must be on our Guard.

But secondly, If the Devil could not work upon our Saviour to doubt of his being the Son of GOD; he will try, if he can, to bring him

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him to *mistrust his Father's Care and Providence over him.* He is hungry, and the Devil prompts him to be in a hurry, and to wait no longer for Relief from God, but to provide for himself through the Power that was in him, by turning the Stones of the Wilderness into Bread. But the Answer *Jesus* vouchsafes to make him, will teach us, that so long as the *ordinary* Providence of God is sufficient for our Provision or Support; *Extraordinary* Ways of satisfying our Necessities are not to be undertaken: In all our Wants God must be relied upon; *His Time* must be waited for with Patience, *his Manner of Relief* be received with Submission, and *his Measure* with Thanks. *Jesus* we see refused a Supply it was in his own Power to procure, rather than he would do an Act which had in it an Intimation of Diffidence, or might be expounded as a Mistrust of his Father's Care over him. And yet there is nothing more usual or common with our spiritual Enemy, than by Occasion of Want to move us to pursue unwarrantable Courses. Thou art *needy*, saith the Devil, to many a poor Wretch, and therefore go, *steal*: Thou canst not rise by *honest* Means, therefore use *indirect*: And from a listening
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to these Suggestions of the Tempter, the unhappy Creatures first betake themselves to petty Frauds and little Tricks, to over-reaching in Business, or Extortions in Trade, to Knavery and Injustice, and at last to downright Rapines and Thefts, to Murders and Villanies which the Devil never fails to tempt Men to, when once he has brought them to a Dependance on himself. But how much better, as well as surer, is it, to depend upon GOD, to follow the Ends, and wait the Means that he prescribes. For if a single Sparrow, (*two of which are sold for a Farthing*) is not forgotten before GOD; what Occasion have we to fear, we whose very Hairs of our Head are all numbered, and who are of abundant more Value than many Sparrows. If therefore he seems to detain or withhold, what we at present seem to want; it surely proceeds from his Wisdom and Love, because he sees it not really for our Good; it being inconsistent with his infinite Goodness to detain that of which we are really in need. For what MAN is there of you, who, if his Son ask Bread, will he give him a Stone? or if he ask a Fish, will he give him a Serpent? If ye then being evil, know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven,

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ven, give good Things to them that ask him? SERM.
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Mat. vii. 9—11. For all Things shall work together for good to them that love GOD, Rom. viii. 28. No good Thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly, Ps. lxxxiv.

11. Even in the utmost of our Extremities therefore let us not despond, or think ourselves sequestered from his Providence and Love: Let us but make him the Object of our Faith, and we shall soon find ourselves the Objects of his Care. If with our Saviour, we are hungry and want Bread; he certainly will give it us; and though the good Angels that minister it to us, come not immediately; yet he will support us in the mean while by the Breath of his Mouth, by the Light of his Countenance, and by the Refreshment of his Promises. Every Word of his Mouth, (if we carefully attend to it) can create a Grace, and every Grace is able to supply the Necessities of the Body as well as the Soul: By the Comforts of the one it can support the other; so that they may bear each other's Burthen, and jointly contribute to alleviate the Pressure. I say therefore again, in the utmost Extremities, in the uneasiest Circumstances we are at any Time in, let us not be provoked to a Diffidence in God, or a Mistrust of his Care
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and Providence over us : *Let us not fret ourselves, lest we be moved in any wise to do evil,* Ps. xxxvii. 8. Let us be neither angry or impatient; be *anxious for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving let our Requests be made known to GOD,* Phil. iv. 6. Let us learn with the Apostle, *in whatsoever State we are in therewith to be content,* ver. 11. For we may be assured that he, who wants not *Power* if he pleases, to turn even *Stones* into *Bread*; and the *Goodness* of whose Nature moves him to be always more compassionate, than the tenderest or most affectionate Father on Earth can be, will supply us, if not according to our wanton Desires, yet according to our real Necessities and Wants. *Cast thy Burthen therefore upon the Lord,* (as the Psalmist directs) *and he shall sustain thee,* Psal. v. or as St. Peter (in like Words) *Cast all your Care upon GOD,* *for he careth for you,* 1 Peter v. 7. *Be sober, be vigilant, because your Adversary the Devil* (as you may learn from my Text) *like a roaring Lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom therefore resist* (after the Example of Christ here set before you) *stedfast in the Faith.*

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MATT. iv. 5, 6, 7.

Then the Devil taketh him up into the Holy City, and setteth him on a Pinnacle of the Temple,

And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of GOD, cast thyself down : For it is written, He shall give his Angels Charge concerning thee, and in their Hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any Time thou dash thy Foot against a Stone.

Jesus saith unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy GOD.

WHEN the Angel that wrestled with ^{SERM. XIV.} Jacob saw that he was not able to prevail against him, Gen. xxxii. 24, &c. he would have left him and gone his way : But it is not so here it seems with the Devil : Who, when he finds his first Assault upon our Lord to fail, is for trying another : Just as he had

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done with *Job* of old, whom when he could not move to blaspheme God, by the first Power he had to rob and deprive him of his Substance, Servants, Children and every thing else he was possessed of; sues for and obtains another Commission to grieve and afflict him by Sores and Pains in his Flesh and Bones. By these Solicitations he gives us to understand, that it is not one Foil that can put this bold and daring Spirit out of Countenance, or make him give over. He is not only content to take a Foil; but out of the very Foil itself he invents Matter for a new Temptation. Since Christ will place his Trust and Confidence in his Father's Care and Providence over him, rather than use unlawful Means to provide for himself; he will move him next to trust still more, to presume so much upon his Father's Protection, as to throw himself into Danger with no other Purpose; than that *he* might send his Angels to save him. If he cannot drive him down to Despair, he will labour to lift him up to Presumption. Either Extreme being all one and the same to him, provided he can but succeed by it to tempt and mislead to Evil. As his first Temptation therefore was grounded upon a Supposition that his Father's Care of him was wanting; this

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this now before us insinuates the Divine Providence and Watchfulness over him to be extraordinary and abundant. But to give the whole Passage it's due Consideration, I shall treat of it in the same Manner I did of the former, *i. e.*

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I. FIRST, I shall make some cursory Observations upon this Tempter's Suggestions and our Saviour's Reply : And then

II. SECONDLY, I shall shew the practical Result of the whole and conclude.

I. My Observations on the Temptation I shall begin with pointing out to you the Condescension of Jesus in still yielding to the Devil the Advantage of Situation and Place. As he was content to be led from *Jordan* into the Wilderness, that Satan might have the more convenient Opportunity and Handle to set upon him ; so now he yields to be led again from the Wilderness to *Jerusalem*, that the Devil might again have him in a Place favourable to his Design. The *Wilderness* was fit for a Temptation arising from *Hunger* and *Want* ; but not for one that was to move to *Vain-glory*. A *populous City* was a much likelier Place for such a Temptation : And

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as *Jerusalem* was at that Time the Capital of *Judea*, the *Temple*, almost in the Center of *Jerusalem*, and the *Pinnacle*, (or highest Battlement of the Tower) the most conspicuous Place of the Temple ; there is our Saviour content to be set for the Opportunity of Temptation. And here the Devil, standing by him, saith unto him, my Text tells us, *If thou be the Son of GOD, cast thyself down, for it is written, &c.* These general Words only the Evangelists record, it being only their Design just to hint to us the subject Matter of the Temptation : But since the Words, as short and general as they are, let us into the Devil's Drift ; we may suppose that the Intent and Meaning of them might be something like this : “ Since in the Matter of Nourishment and Food, thou wilt needs depend upon thy Father's Providence, that he can sustain thee without any outward and visible Provision ; make now a further Trial of his Care of thee, by casting thyself down, that Angels may catch thee. Thou art now at *Jerusalem*, the famous and Holy City of the World ; here thou art on the Top of the Pinnacle of that Temple which is dedicated to GOD : And if thou art his Son, there cannot be devised a more ready
“ Way

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“ Way to spread thy Glory, and to proclaim
“ thy Divinity, than by casting thyself down,
“ in the Sight of so many as are now looking
“ upon thee, and so descending to the Ground,
“ miraculously through the Air, safe and
“ unhurt. For Danger there can be none
“ since the Scriptures declare, that *no Evil*
“ *shall happen to any one that dwelleth under*
“ *the Defence of the most High*, and therefore
“ much less to thee, *for he shall give his*
“ *Angels Charge concerning thee, and in their*
“ *Hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any*
“ *Time thou dash thy Foot against a Stone,*
“ Psal. xci. 10, 11. Since therefore by one
“ Act thou mayst be safe and celebrated,
“ trust thy Father and those ministring Spi-
“ rits with thine assured Preservation; and
“ cast thyself down.” Thus thought the
Devil to have deluded our Saviour; and to
have deluded him too, by a feigned Imita-
tion of his own Way of arguing: In the
former Temptation Jesus had silenced him by
a Citation from Scripture: And therefore in
this, the Devil thinking to be with him before-
hand, cites Scripture to him. But how does
he cite it? Maimed and perverted: He leaves
out a Part, and misapplies the whole. So
far indeed he was right in his Application,
that the *Angels*, who are all of them *mini-*

String Spirits sent forth to minister for the Heirs of Salvation, Heb. i. ult. would certainly also

minister in any Dangers or Necessities that should happen to Christ, their Sovereign and Lord. It was not in this therefore that the Devil's Fallacy was couched, not in citing a Passage out of Scripture, which was not in it; but in not citing the whole fairly as it stood, but in mutilating the Holy Text, as I just now observed, in citing one Part and leaving out the other. Take the Words as they stand in the inspired Author himself, and then, as your Sense is sound and good; so make they nothing for the Tempter's Design. The Text, as it is written in the holy Psalmist, runs as follows: Speaking to the Man that *dwelleth under the Defence of the most High*, to him that *abideth under the Shadow of the Almighty*; *There shall no Evil* (saith he) *happen unto thee, neither shall any Plague come nigh thy Dwelling*: *For he shall give his Angels Charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy Ways*: *They shall bear thee in their Hands, that thou hurt not thy Foot against a Stone*, Psal. xci. 10 — 12. This is Scripture, and this is Truth. God gives his Angels Charge over his Servants to keep and preserve them *in all their Ways*. But those last Words the Devil leaves out:

And

And the Promise which GOD makes to his People, whilst they keep within due Bounds, and walk within their proper Paths; he wrests and abuses to persuade to rash and erroneous Courses. GOD commands us to walk *in our own Ways*, in those Ways in which it is our Duty to walk; and then he promises us his Angels for our Guards: And Satan in pretence of their Tutelage and Protection, prompts Christ to throw himself rashly into Danger: If thou art the Son of GOD, expose thy Life against GOD's Will, and the Angels who are GOD's Ministers, shall interpose and preserve thee.

This perverse Sense does that Scripture bear, when mangled by the Devil, which, as it comes genuine from *David's Pen*, bears a Sense sound and comfortable: However the Devil's abusing Scripture does not prevent our Lord from again shewing the Strength of it, when truly cited and aptly applied. He rather snatches *this Sword of the Spirit, the Word of GOD*, Ephes. vi. 17. out of his impure and murderous Hands, and vanquishes again the Arch Enemy of our Salvation with the Weapon he had abused. For no other Answer makes our Lord to the Suggestion and Temptation of Satan, drawn we see from

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Scripture misquoted and abused ; than Scripture again, than the Word of GOD, cited just as GOD had spoken it. *It is written* (saith he) *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy GOD.* For all Scripture is true and at Unity with itself as that GOD is, by whose Spirit it was endited. Where it seems to carry any Difficulties with it, it needs no other Light to clear it, than that which always arises from itself. Nor is a false Gloss or Misconstruction put on one Text, any way more easily discovered and removed, than by comparing it with another. And therefore this Method our Saviour uses : The Fallacy of the Sophister in his Citation of one Text, he lays open and exposes by citing another. The holy Angels of GOD are our Guards, it is true, and will preserve us from Danger, whilst we are pursuing our Duty, walking in the Ways which GOD prescribes us : But not when we presumptuously thrust ourselves upon Evil, not when we comply with the Devil's Motions and do as he bids. GOD's Promises of his Care of us should encourage our *Faith*, but not our *Presumption* : And therefore to cast ourselves, or to depend, upon any immediate Providence, when human and ordinary Means are at Hand, is not to put our *Trust* in GOD, but

but to *disobey* him. We may challenge God's SER M.
XIV. Word as far as it goes; but not strain it to a Sense which we know it was never designed to bear. His Protection we may rely on, whenever it is wanting; but to try an Experiment of his Divine Power, and Readiness to assist us, when there is no Necessity, is to tempt God, and subject his Promises to an unjust Examination. This is the Meaning of our Saviour's Answer with which he again silences the Devil: He could not elude the Force it bore, but experienced how vainly his Labour was bestowed in tempting Christ to tempt God.

Having thus gone through the Observations I designed to make cursorily upon the Text, or in that Order in which they record to us the Tempter's Suggestions and our Saviour's Reply; I shall now in the

II. SECOND Place, shew the practical Result of the whole and conclude. And first, from the Coherence of this Temptation with that on which I discoursed in my last, we may observe the Method the Devil uses to impose upon Mankind; *viz.* if he cannot seduce a Man one Way, he will endeavour to beguile and delude him another. By his first
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him not to be worked upon by any Persuasions to *misbelieve* what God had pronounced of him, nor to *distrust* his Care and Providence over him : And therefore when he enters upon his second Assault, he turns from one Extreme to the other ; and tempts him to *Presumption*, to a confident Expectance of God's extraordinary Protection, even whilst he was safe under his ordinary Providence. Being on the Pinnacle of the Temple, from whence there were regular Stairs to descend on, he persuades him to throw himself headlong to the Ground, and to do an Act which would destroy him as Man, in order (as he insinuates) to prove himself the Son of God. From thus hurrying him to a new Temptation, from what he had learned of his Temper by a former ; we may observe, I say, how subtle and ready the Devil is, when at any time he is foiled, to find Matter from the Foil itself, whereon to found a new Attack. For Instance, Is a Man happily brought off from his vitious Courses ? Does he see the Evil and Folly of his Ways, and therefore resolve to amend his Life, to love and practise Religion for the future ? Why then, if Satan can neither tempt him to return again to his

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Sins; nor from a Review and Reflection upon his past Transgressions drive him to Despair; he will endeavour at least, from the very Change of Life he has made, to puff him up into spiritual Pride; and from his *GOD be merciful to me a Sinner*, will soon advance him to a *Stand off for I am holier than thou*. This too many (rigid and severe in their first Reformation) have experienced to their Cost: If the Devil cannot again bring them back to their former Licentiousness, Intemperance, Carnality and Lusts; he will inflame them with high Opinions and Conceit of their present Sanctity and Holiness of Life; and so pervert their first Escape into a second and greater Danger. And often too, will he attempt, and attempt with Success, what he tried here in vain with our Saviour, *viz.* from a Man's Dislike of one Vice to solicit him to another: As from a Hatred of Covetousness to run him into Prodigality; or, on the contrary, from a Guard and Caution against being prodigal, to make him covetous. So that on every Side, the Devil's Subtlety and Skill requires us to be on our strictest Watch: Never to think ourselves safe and secure; but to be always jealous and suspicious of ourselves, lest (if we look not well about

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about us) he take a Handle from one Temptation in which we repel him, to attack us more slyly and overcome us in another.

This Lesson the very Coherence or Connection of the Scripture now before us, with the Text of my last, the Succession or Following of one Temptation so closely and immediately upon the Heels of another, should impress on our Minds. But there is another Lesson still, which the Temptation that has been the Subject of this Day's Discourse particularly calls on us to mind and attend. And that is that *we beware of Presumption*; that we in no wise wilfully neglect or refuse the ordinary and necessary Means of our Preservation, (whether it be of Soul or Body) upon any Apprehension, that GOD will take Care of us, whether we take Care of ourselves or not: When sufficient *ordinary* Means are afforded; *extraordinary* are neither to be relied on, nor expected. GOD will secure his Children in the Ways of Nature, whilst they are doing their Duty; but loves not to be tempted to Actions unreasonable, because unnecessary. He will protect his Servants in, or from, all Evils happening without their Knowledge, or against their Will; but not from Evils of their own procuring. Let the Devil

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vil and the World offer to do them all the Mischief they can, whilst they are innocent, they shall be safe : But if they once offer to do Injury to themselves, farewell the Protection of GOD, over those who have lost their own Prudence before. Farewel too his miraculous Preservation and Supply, if we have Means and Opportunities enough within our Reach, and yet will not use them. For if in such Circumstances we perish or miscarry, it is not GOD's Want either of Will or Power, we must blame, but our own Indolence and Sloth. In the *Desert*, where there is nothing but *Rocks* and *Stones*, even they, when struck by his Servant's Rod, shall yield *Water* to his People, Numb. xx. 11. But when they are in a Country where *Water* may be found, if they will have it, they must dig. When *Elisha* was at *Dotban* a little Village not able to defend himself from the *Assyrians*, he had *Horses and Chariots of Fire* to defend himself, 2 *Kings* vi. 17. But when a little while afterwards he was in the Town of *Samaria* (a strong fortified City) and the King of *Israel* sent a Man to take away his Head, ver. 32. he depended not upon the same Assistance again, but bid those that were about him to shut the Door. So Christ, who
in

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in the *Wilderness* miraculously fed those who had no Victuals near them; when he was in this same Town of *Samaria*, sent his Disciples to buy Meat, *John* iv. 8. And notwithstanding St. Paul was told by an *Angel* that there should be no Loss of any Man's Life that was then in the Ship, *Acts* xxvii. 22. yet he calls upon the Mariners to cut the Ropes and cast Anchor, and to use all the Means they had in their Power for their Safety and Preservation.

A Word more and I have done: What I have here said concerning our Duty not to tempt God in our *temporal* Affairs, will hold equally with Relation to those that are *spiritual*. We are no more to presume upon extraordinary miraculous Grace in the one, than upon his extraordinary miraculous Protection in the other. But as the ordinary Grace and Means of Salvation, which he daily affords us, is sufficient, if we are diligent to use them as we should do, to bring us to the Happiness for which we are designed; to them we are to apply, and on them with a suitable Life to rest, for our future Welfare. They therefore that neglect the Word and Sacraments, the publick Service and Communion of the Church as insufficient to the End proposed by them, trusting to I know not what enthusiastic

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fiastical Persuasions in their own Breasts, are S E R M.
throwing themselves headlong at the Sugge- XIV.
tions of the Tempter, from an immoderate
Height; and if they are caught by *any Angels*
in their Fall, it is to be feared, it is by some
of the Devil's sending.

And as thus we may presume in the Busi-
ness of Religion, by neglecting the Means
which God has appointed and ordained; So
also it is Presumption when without any just
Call or Warrant from him we thrust ourselves
into Danger, and betake ourselves into Ways
which he has forbid; when instead of *ponder-
ing the Paths of our Feet*, as *Solomon* advises,
that our Ways may be established, Prov. iv.
26. or by due Forecast and Thought or-
dered aright; we precipitantly rush into those
Places, and Companies and Occasions of Sin
which we might well enough avoid, and in
which God in his Displeasure often leaves us
to ourselves, and suffers us to be overcome by
Temptation. There are many I know, es-
pecially among Youths, who think they may
a little consort with Sinners in their Scenes of
Debauchery, that they may see the Folly and
Odiousness of Vice, and so the better avoid it:
But this is not only to stand in the Way and
Danger of Temptation, but to have swallowed
the

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the Bait. Cast thyself down, saith Satan to our Lord, *that thou mayst prove thyself the Son of GOD :* Our Saviour heard him and that was all. But here saith the Devil, Confort with Sinners and have Fellowship in their Sins, that thou mayst become a Saint : The poor Wretch listens to and follows the Advice, and becomes just such as the Devil would have him to be. For, alas ! the *Height* of Presumption sure must it be, to prostitute GOD's Care and Preservation of us to our Lusts, to make them as it were the Pander to our Sinful Delights, and to expect him to be at the Expence of working a Miracle to preserve us in a Danger, into which, without disobeying him, we could never have run. If ever we hope for his Protection, we must always take Care to have *some* Guard upon ourselves. We must follow at all Times, and upon all Occasions the good Advice of the Apostle St. Paul : *We must see that we walk circumspectly, not as Fools but as Wise,* Ephes. v. 15.

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The End of the First Volume.

